■ Entertainment
Another ex 'shocked' by Ipe's deception

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7,000 votes decide Cebu race for gov

■ World/A12
After 7 years, Cassini makes historic orbit around Saturn

■ Metro/A23
Ship captain falls into sea; rescue ongoing

■ Sports
Roddick-Federer showdown looms

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No mea culpa from bishop: I won't post bail; I'll go to jail

By Blanche S. Rivera and Armand N. Nocum

"I WILL not make an apology."

Slapped with a libel suit, Augustinian Archbishop Oscar Cruz – who accused the Philippine Amusement and Gaming Corp. of sending female employees to a Metr-

BISHOP, A-10

'Dubya' phones Gloria: Congratulations, thanks

US PRESIDENT George W. Bush has phoned his staunchest ally in Southeast Asia to extend his congratulations and thanks.

White House spokesperson and press secretary Scott McClellan said in Washington that Bush called President Macapagal-Arroyo on Wednesday to congratulate her "on winning another term in office."

BUSH, A-10

GMA no transition president after all

THE CITY OF PINES is a city in pain after "Igme" unleashed its fury of winds and water wreaking the country's summer resort.

PHOTOS BY ROMEO RANOCO AND JOHN CHUA, A-2 AND A-3

'Igme' heads for Taiwan, leaves 19 dead

By PDI Northern Luzon Bureau

TYPHOON "Igme" weakened on its way out to Taiwan yesterday but disaster officials said it left the death toll swelling to at least 19 in Northern Luzon.

President Macapagal-Arroyo ordered the release of more funds to provinces that suffered the brunt of the typhoon, Intel relief operations, and to the Department of Social Welfare and Development.

The National Disaster Coordinating Council placed agricultural and infrastructure losses at P213 million.

Casualties, who recently celebrated the quadricentennial of the arrival of the statue-shrine image of Our Lady of Piat, expressed grief over the death of nine people from flash floods in five towns and the destruction of more than P151 million worth of palay and corn in Cagayan.

IGME, A-12

Change in gov't only after term ends in 2010

By Juliet Labog-Javellana

DOES this mean she wants the whole six years?

A day after her inaugural, President Macapagal-Arroyo appeared to be backtracking on her earlier declared willingness to cut her term to pave the way for a shift to the parliamentary system of government in 2007.

The President said in a speech in Baguio City yesterday that she would like to see the parliamentary and federal system in place at the end of her term in 2010, as one of her legacies. She said she wanted a new Constitution enabling the fundamental change written during her incumbency.

"After her term, she wants to see a federal system of government [set up]," Congressman Bernardo, who served as this country's media bureau chief during the election campaign, said in Ilocano.

Two senior Palace officials, who both requested anonymity also said the President believed that a shift would be best made in 2010.

One of them said this would allow for a "smoother transition." By 2010, "all the other reforms would have been put in place,"

STORY, A-4

In or out of Cabinet? Moment of truth

By Sir C. Cabacungan Jr.

THE PRESIDENT'S men and women attended the first post-inaugural Cabinet meeting tonight at the White House in Clark, Angeles, Pampanga, each uncertain whether he or she would be in or out after the meeting.

But to avoid a disruption of public service, according to Executive Secretary Alberto Romulo, President Macapagal-Arroyo issued yesterday a memorandum ordered more 30 directing all Cabinet members, heads of offices and ambassadors to carry on with their duties in a holdover capacity until their resignation(s) or their respective replacements had been named.

Interviewed shortly before the start of the Cabinet meeting, foreign Secretary Vince Perio said: "I'm sure there will be movement or changes but as to when and who, that is for [the President's] sole prerogative. He don't know if a will happen in the first 100 days."

Perio said all the Cabinet members were aware they had to be team players and observe the President decided. "You were that's where the buck we are headed."

At press time, Perio said the President was expected to announce her 10-point program of government to the Cabinet and she expected such members to give their inputs. He said the President would then direct all Cabinet members to draft their plans for the first 100 days and the first 365 days targeting the 10-point plan with a hard date of completion and concrete goals.

"As always, the President doesn't like any good that has no opposite, timetable or target because that is her nature."

The President was confident and cheerful when she arrived at 6:25 p.m. or more than half an hour before she scheduled Cabi-

STORY, A-4

'Would you concede if you know you were cheated?'

By Sir C. Cabacungan Jr., Lira del Puerto and Carlos Pablo

EVEN after her inauguration, President Macapagal-Arroyo's presidential-election branch still had its takers among the leaders of the opposition.

Defeated vice presidential candidate Loren Legarda yesterday expressed that she and opposition presidential candidate Fernando Poe Jr. were not about to concede.

"Would you concede if you know you were cheated?" Legarda said after yesterday's oath-taking of San Juan Mayor Joseph Victor "JV" Ejercito.

But asked if it would mean happen then, she said, "Never say never."

While still refusing to categorize this image, the former senator said she hoped the President's 10-point agenda would be implemented, "for the sake of the people."

Earlier, Legarda told the reporters she would not accept defeat because she had not been defeated. "We may have lost in the counting, but we won in the precincts," she said.

But she would help "in my own capacity" to uphold the farce of Mr. Ejercito, "because it has already been very difficult [for them]," Legarda said. "We must all move on."

The main object of the President's reconciliation endeavor remained silent yesterday even as

STORY, A-4

TOGETHER again for the oath-taking of San Juan Mayor JV Ejercito: Opposition standard-bearer Fernando Poe Jr and Ejercito presidential bet Loren Legarda with Makati Mayor Jejomar Binay and Sen. Juan Ponce Enrile.

Defiant Saddam rejects charges, says Bush the real criminal

SADDAM: Mum: judgment day on Iraq's current chief with 11 aides handcuffed to Iraqi assembly.

BAGHDAD, Iraq – A defiant Saddam Hussein rejected charges of war crimes and genocide against him in a court appearance on Thursday, telling a judge "this is all theater, the real criminal is Bush," according to a reporter in an official media pool.

Saddam's hands were cuffed when he was brought in the court but the shackles were removed for the 30-minute arraignment at Camp Victory, a former Saddam palace on the outskirts of Baghdad.

"I am Saddam Hussein, the president of Iraq," Saddam twice said, according to the CNN reporter, who described him as alternately downcast and defiant. Other times, Saddam appeared confused.

In his first public appearance since he was captured seven months ago, Saddam refused to sign a list of charges against him unless a lawyer was present, and he questioned the court's jurisdiction, according to the reporter.

STORY, A-11

Hip-swaying Saddam doll a hit in Baghdad

BAGHDAD – Inspired to dance to his tune, fans in Baghdad say they've a chubby, gun-toting Saddam Hussein doll now giving his hips to the "Hippy Hippy Shake."

Sex seems to sell Baghdad fans doing a quick waist in dancing Saddam dolls – four high-heavy-powered peppers of the former president, kitted out in full insurgent regalia, who swing their hips to classic pop music at the flick of a switch.

Decked out with handcuffs, a pistol, gun, combat vest, bloodstained and an AK-47, Saddam dances to the "Hippy Hip-

STORY, A-11

PHILIPPINE DAILY INQUIRER
FRIDAY, JULY 2, 1999
Second FRONTPAGE

WEATHER FORECAST

Don't count me out yet–Barbers

By Christine O. Avendaño

IT'S NOT over yet for ex-Sen. Robert Barbers.

Back from a vacation, Barbers yesterday said he intended to appeal the Commission on Elections decision upholding the proclamation of Sen. Rodolfo Biazon as the 12th and last winning senator.

This time, Barbers said, he would file a motion for reconsideration with the Comelec en banc after the poll agency's five division handed down its ruling the other day.

Barbers contended the Comelec first division's decision was done in "haste," saying election officials did not honor an agreement with his lawyers to resolve the unresolved votes from certain areas as well as in places where special elections were held.

"Why did they not count them?" he asked in a phone interview.

Barbers said his lawyers had brought the necessary documents with them on the hearing the side of day but no action was taken.

Barbers had petitioned the Comelec to annul Biazon's lone 2-pesada-mation, claiming there were 20,229 votes that had yet to be counted.

But Comelec officials said the uncounted votes would not have affected Biazon's standing.

This prompted Barbers to say Biazon were "some senatorial votes" in the first division who were up parents by biased against me."

He said he was fulfilling the voters' agreement to count the uncounted votes, he felt he was "not getting fair treatment" from the Comelec.

The first division is presided over by Commissioner Rufino Javier with Commissioners Resurrection Borra and Florentino Tuason as members. Tuason is with the Comelec second division but was sitting in for Commissioner Meglito Eamil-lano whose appointment was not confirmed by Congress.

"I just want to know the truth. If they say after the counts that I lost, I will accept it. There's no problem for me," Barbers said.

He said he had no quarrel with Biazon and was saddened that both of them had to contend the last to seats seat.

"I respect him (Biazon) but we have to undergo the legal process," he said.

Both Barbers and Biazon ran under the administration K-4 coalition.

Bought for comment, Biazon said it was Barbers' right to file a petition.

He said he would agree to a count of the uncontested votes if this was necessary.

"I'll (even) agree to go down to the division canvass if all the provinces concerned, but the question is will the Comelec allow this?" Biazon said in a phone interview.

Barbers' son, Rep. Herbert Jex Barbers (Lakas, Surigao del Norte), reiterated that their camp would exhaust the issue to the Comelec en banc.

"We have not lost hope in the system. We believe there are still upright commissioners who will worthy this error and decide this fight fair and square," the young Barbers said. With Carlos Padilla

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Let's revive 'bayanihan' spirit–Noli

DE CASTRO

ONE DAY his inauguration, Vice President Noli de Castro yesterday delivered his own inaugural speech in Bacolod City, making the revival of the bayanihan spirit that has been a great Filipino tradition to achieve national unity.

De Castro reminded everyone that, though seemingly forgotten in recent times, the bayanihan spirit had carried and sustained the light of the Filipinos against adversity and had proven that any obstacle can be hurdled by working together towards a common goal.

He also underscored the importance of the principle of shared responsibility in addressing the problems of poverty, criminality, unemployment, low quality of public education and lack of mass housing.

De Castro said that the true strength of change, progress and success stimulates from a united and cooperative people.

Peace and prosperity

"My one humble theme (for) today," De Castro said in Filipino, "unity is the only way to peace and prosperity."

De Castro and President Fidel Ramos arrive in Bacolod City a day after their inauguration in Cebu City on Wednesday.

The new vice president said his decision to hold the inauguration in Cebu and the visit to Bacolod City in Mindanao was to show that the top officials of the land were concerned with the just of the affairs of Luzon, but of the Visayas and Mindanao as well.

While admitting that the recently concluded elections have deeply divided the nation, he expressed his readiness to work not to all who have campaigned for the election, regardless of political affiliation and beliefs. What is needed at this time is to throw our lots of unduly rather than think of oneself, he said.

"The time for politics is over. Let us now get on the road to unity and progress," he said.

Cebuga officials warmly welcomed President Ramos into Bacolod City, signaled del Rosario in which region the general rose of her longest winning margins in the elections.

Thousands lined the streets for his and he had no quarrel with Biazon and was saddened that both of them had to contend the last to seats seat.

"I respect him (Biazon) but we have to undergo the legal process," he said.

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the caravan of Mr Arroyo and De Castro who gave special recognition to the Ceriaga region with Zeus Salo working trail after the Cebu inauguration.

Ceriaga congressman urged the rest of the nation to unite behind the President "so the nation would move forward and leave the economy and partisan politics of the immediate past behind."

Surigao del Sur Governor Johnny Pimentel welcomed the president and the new vice president were Sen. Franklin Drilon, Surigao del Sur Rep. Prospero Pichay Jr., Agusan del Norte Gov. Efren Amante and her representative who is more a representative of the province; Butuan City Mayor Democrito Plaza, Surigao del Sur Rep. Jesnar Falcon, Agusan del Sur Gov. Adolph Edward Plaza, Agusan del Norte Rep. Lorenzo Sol Amante, Siargao City Mayor Florencio Gatap Surigao City Mayor Alfonso Cuenco, Surnay Misamis Oriental congressmen now Gov. Oscar Moreno and Ruben Kashmir Gov. Pax Mangudadatu were also present.

Mr. Arroyo and De Castro left Cebu City 11 a.m., yesterday and arrived at the Butuan City airport for a press conference and briefing on developments in Ceriaga. From there they proceeded to the man Urios Gymnasium for a mass oath-taking of local officials.

In her speech before Ceriaga officials and residents, the President called herself "a child of Mindanao" and spoke Pantawatan, an ability that endeared her to people in the south.

RP stint at helm of Security Council over

By Jerome Aning

WITH one last bang of the gavel, Ambassador Lauro Baja Jr., Philippine permanent representative to the United Nations, officially relinquished yesterday (Wednesday in New York) the presidency of the Security Council, ending the Philippine's seventh single-term presidency of the UN's most powerful body.

Baja's last official act as council president was to adjourn the 53-member body's 3,930th formal meeting, during which British Ambassador Sieger James Perry briefed members on the results of the fact-finding mission he recently headed in West Africa.

"I will say that Jane had been a heroic, albeit melodramatic, month for the council. We had over the past month ... rushed important endeavors for which the council should collectively be proud," Baja said, as he broke tradition by reading a statement before adjourning the meeting.

The ambassador was referring to the five resolutions the Philippines shepherded through the Security Council during its presidency, the most important of which was Resolution 1246. The resolution, which was unanimously adopted, affirms the sanctions, lists, considered the handover of sovereignty by the United States-led Coalition Provisional Authority to the Interim Iraqi Government.

FIRST INQTV WINNER
Texter Ramil Jimenez, a 2-D animator from Bulacan, receives his 21-inch Sony color TV from INQUIRER AVP Imee Alcantara, as Business Development Officer Dennis Leung looks on. Jimenez won the Sony for sending in the best "fearless views" answer to last week's "Tanong ng Bayan." InqTV, which airs Thursdays at 8 p.m. on ABC, will give away 12 more TV sets in the next three months. ROMY ROMILLADA

Rebellion charges baseless–Montayre

By Philip C. Tubeza

OPPOSITION figure Linda Olaguer Montayre yesterday branded as baseless and politically motivated the charge that she was involved in a plot to overthrow the government.

In a one-page letter to Acting Justice Secretary Ma. Merceditas Gutierrez, Montayre said there was no truth to the allegation that she was the mastermind of the plot to plant bombs across Metro Manila and assassinate Speaker Jose de Venecia.

"They are all baseless and without merit and they can only prosper if the instrumentalities of justice continue to take orders from the [First Couple]... I am not involved in criminal activities of any kind that [President Macapagal-] Arroyo and her cohorts imagine," said Montayre, a former nun.

Former police Senior Insp. Roberto Camarista, who has been charged with rebellion, tagged Montayre as the brains behind the planting of bombs outside the Department of Interior and Local Government building in Quezon City, the Department of National Defense building in Camp Aguinaldo and the Santuario de San Antonio church in Forbes Park, Makati City, last week.

The bombs were discovered and defused before they could do any damage.

'Trial by publicity'

Montayre, secretary general of the People's Consultative Assembly, accused the DOJ of conducting a "trial by publicity" to defame her.

"The tentacles of your department have filed a Niagara of criminal cases against me (sic), all of which are politically motivated [and] designed to silence all forms of opposition against the illegitimate presidency," she said.

"If there is no criminal complaint, stop using media to pillory me and subject me to the despicable unconstitutional trial by publicity. If this continues, you will compel me to seek redress from institutions in our Constitution empowered to give remedies where all else in government fails," Montayre said.

She asked Gutierrez if she was being investigated on orders of the President.

"Is it on your own initiative that this policy was adopted or is it the order of [Ms Arroyo]? The public has the right to know about such a policy, if it exists, because if it does, then unbridled tyranny has now descended upon our land worse than the dreaded scourge of dictatorship and martial law," Montayre added.

The DOJ has subpoenaed Montayre and rescheduled the preliminary investigation of the charge against her to July 20.

Aside from Camarista, the other suspects in the bombing plot who have been charged in the Quezon City Regional Trial Court include his househelp Dante P. Fuertes, Antonio B. Mercader, Benjamin Sim, Fred Diamante, William Ramos, and others known only Lord, Soggy, Jun Budoy, Buknoy, Ranger, Rotsen and Nelson, and several John and Jane Does.

Bombing blitz

Camarista said Montayre and Sim, the plot's alleged financier, tapped his group to conduct a bombing blitz in the capital, including attacks on the Commission on Elections building and SM Shoemart.

He claimed Montayre and Sim promised to provide the group with high-powered guns, including a rocket-propelled grenade to use to assassinate De Venecia.

Montayre allegedly gave them a baby Armalite, two .45 cal. pistols and two hand grenades while Sim gave them a picture of De Venecia's car which they were to blow up.

"Montayre disclosed to (Camarista) that there were other simultaneous and similar acts which were already being undertaken by other groups opposed to the present dispensation," Velasco said.

Camarista and his accomplices were allegedly promised P100,000 each to carry out the bombings.

The police raided Camarista's house in Park Place Executive Village, Cainta, Rizal, on June 22 and found bomb-making ingredients, guns and ammunition.

The materials included one-and-a-half sacks of ammonium nitrate, C-4 explosives, a blasting cap, detonating cord, black powder, a half gallon of gasoline, packing tape and five alarm clocks.

LPG prices slashed

By Abigail L. Ho

OFFERING some respite from steadily rising prices, Pilipinas Shell Petroleum Corp. and Caltex Philippines Inc. have brought down prices of their cooking gas by P1 per kilogram.

Starting 12:01 a.m. today, Shell's Shellane can be bought at P11 cheaper per cylinder, with retail prices now ranging from P354 to P364 a tank.

Caltex's price rollback, on the other hand, will take effect at noon today, with Caltex LPG now priced P11 lower at around P372 per 11-kilogram cylinder.

Both firms cited the fall in international contract prices for liquefied petroleum gas (LPG) as their reason for implementing a rollback.

Data from the Department of Energy showed that LPG contract prices fell $21.10 per metric ton (MT) in July to $327.67 per MT from $348.77 the month before.

Total (Philippines) Corp. and dominant Visayas and Mindanao LPG supplier Pryce Gases Inc. both said there was no need for them to roll back their prices as they had kept their rates at the levels they were on before the last round of increases was implemented.

Total corporate affairs manager Malu Espina said that while the company implemented an increase of P1.70 per kilogram two weeks ago, most of the TotalGaz dealers did not hike their prices.

"Most, if not all, of our dealers didn't implement an increase. Their primary concern was to ensure their competitiveness in the market," she said.

She explained that when industry leader Petron Corp. did not raise their prices two weeks ago when all of the other players did, TotalGaz dealers also decided maintain their prices to remain competitive.

Pryce Gases vice president for external affairs Gerry Quisumbing said the company had initiated a price rollback 10 days ago, also in response to Petron's non-movement.

Energy Secretary Vincent Perez said the fall in this month's LPG contract price showed that the market was slowly going back to a state of "normalcy."

"With world oil prices going down and local oil firms immediately responding to this development, a sense of normalcy is slowly returning in the market. We hope that this downward trend will be sustained in the coming weeks," he said in a statement yesterday.

Prices of cooking gas had increased seven times this year, the seventh one being the biggest hike implemented so far at P1.70 per kilogram.

Since January, LPG prices have risen by a total of P6.65 per kilogram.

Apart from those seven LPG price increases, consumers have had to deal with higher prices of gasoline, diesel and kerosene early last month with prices of these products rising by 90 centavos per liter.

Search is on for military's 2nd in command

By Alcuin Papa

A HIGH-level reshuffle in the military hierarchy is expected soon with the retirement on Wednesday of Lt. Gen. Rodolfo Garcia, vice chief of staff of the Armed Forces of the Philippines.

The AFP's brand of triumvirate has been deliberating since last week on Garcia's successor. All generals with three-star and some two-star rank are deemed eligible to be named vice chief of staff, the military's second highest-ranking officer.

Among the leading candidates are Army chief Lt. Gen. Efren Fil, AFP deputy chief Vice Admiral Antonio de los Reyes, Navy chief Vice Admiral Ernesto de Leon, Northern Luzon Command chief Lt. Gen. Romeo Dominguez, Southern Luzon command chief Lt. Gen. Alfonso Dagoubo, Western Command chief Vice Admiral Ruben Domingo and National Capital Region Command chief Lt. Gen. Alberto Razon Jr.

De los Reyes, Dominguez and Domingo are members of Philippine Military Academy Class '71, while De Leon and Abu belong to PMA Class '72. Dagoubo and Bergonia are ex-PMAers and were commissioned into the military in 1973.

The hunt for a vice chief of staff is seen as a precursor to the next top chief of staff, the highest ranking officer in the AFP.

All the generals considered except for Dagoubo, who is set to retire in October, are also candidates to replace AFP Chief of Staff Gen. Narciso Abaya who is due to retire also in October. Abaya graduated from the United States Military Academy at West Point in 1971.

Able to serve as the front-runner for the post of chief of staff since the Army chief and the Southern Command chief have traditionally been the strongest contenders for the post.

Bergonia is also a strong candidate given his close ties to Malacañang, but he the fact that he is not a PMAer.

Also set to retire soon—in August—is Southern Command chief Lt. Gen. Roy Rosales, another non-PMAer who was commissioned into the military in 1971. Central Command chief Lt. Gen. Jacinto Ligot (PMA '75)—it also due to retire in August. The retirement of Rosales, Ligot and Dagoubo will create major movements within the military hierarchy.

Others being considered for the post of vice chief of staff are Air Force officer in charge Maj. Gen. Avelardo Sorsot (PMA '71), 6th Infantry Division chief Brig. Gen. Generoso Senga (PMA '72), PMA superintendent Brig. Gen. Edilberto Ada (PMA '72), Army chief of staff Maj. Gen. Hector Tolentino (PMA '72) and Marine commandant Maj. Gen. Emmanuel Teodosio.

The vice chief of staff, who does not have any troops under his command, assumes the position of chief of staff when the latter is out of the country or is otherwise unable to discharge his duties.

The vice chief of staff heads the AFP's Housing Board, the Office of Ethnic Minorities and Public Accommodating and the Modernization Board.

Garcia (PMA Class '70) also becomes the first ranking officer to retire from the AFP in the new term of President Gloria Macapagal-Arroyo, the military's commander in chief.

FULL HOUSE?? Corporal Terrence Day of the Royal Canadian Mounted Police and Canadian Ambassador to the Philippines Peter Sutherland watch as residents clean up the clogged waterway in Pasig. The Canadians led the clean-up drive, which is being sponsored by the Canadian government. (See story on Page A 23) EDD ARCAYA

'Imelda' docu distributor goes to SC over TRO

By Philip C. Tubeza

THE LOCAL distributor of the documentary on former first lady Imelda Marcos yesterday asked the Supreme Court to allow the public showing of the film.

In a 19-page petition, United Pictures Inc. asked the high tribunal to overturn a Makati court's temporary restraining order stopping the showing of the film "Imelda" because the TRO violated the constitutionally guaranteed freedoms of speech, expression and of the press.

It added that Makati Judge Maria Cristina Cornejo's order should be junked since Marcos herself had consented to the showing of he film. United furnished the SC a copy of the documentary for its appreciation.

Simple case

"This is a simple case that demands immediate intervention and strong action by this honorable court. Recourse to this tribunal is necessitated by the brazen and stark violation of the Constitution by [Judge Cornejo]," United said.

On June 24, Cornejo effectively prohibited the public exhibition of the documentary when she issued the TRO in favor of Marcos' lawyer Jose Roy III, who said showing the film would violate her right to privacy.

United, however, pointed out that Marcos had consented to the filming and exhibition of the documentary when she signed a contract with the film's maker Ramona Diaz on Dec. 11, 1998.

Ilocos Norte Gov. Ferdinand "Bong-Bong" Marcos, son of the former first lady, also executed a "personal release" that allowed Diaz and her "successors and licensees" to show and release the documentary.

United also said that Marcos could not invoke her right to privacy "against free speech, expression and the press" since she was a public figure and her life in public office was "within the realm of the public domain."

It noted that the SC had expanded the right to free speech and expression to include freedom in film and profane motion pictures and to exhibit them.

United also said that Marcos failed to substantiate "by any real evidence" her claim that the film's showing would "undoubtedly result injustice" on her. MNS Aburgan C. Ortiz

Corrections

ON PAGE 1 of yesterday's issue, the story under the headline in the "standout" said: "20 M (the cellular phone) disbursed." It should have read: "P20M in [the] cellular [phone calls] is disbursed," which was the head of the story in the Morning section.

* * *

Readers may send their requests for corrections of factual errors in writing to Gerry Lirio, city editor, Philippine Daily Inquirer, 5th Building, Chino Roces Avenue corner Makati Avenue, Bangkal, Cbo. [illegible] or e-mail [illegible]. Corrections will be published in the next issue.

Complaints about lack of fairness or objectivity in news stories should be made to Sandy Ocampo, the ombudsman and his number or those of the [illegible] and e-mail [illegible].

The Daily Gospel

Friday, July 2, 2004
13th Week in Ordinary Time
1st Reading: Am 8:4-6, 9-12
Gospel: Mt 9:9-13

As Jesus passed on from there, he saw a man named Matthew at his seat in the customs house, and he said to him, "Follow me." And Matthew got up and followed him. Soon it happened, while he [illegible] at table in Matthew's house, many tax collectors and other sinned joined Jesus and his disciples. When the Pharisees saw this they said to his disciples, "Why is it that your master eats with tax collectors and sinners?"

When Jesus [illegible] he said, "Healthy people do not need a doctor, but sick people do. Go and find out what this means. What I want is mercy, not sacrifice. I did not come to call the righteous but sinners."

Commentary:

No sinner could generally did not go around with a high salary. He literally despised social sinners. Chances are related Jesus to attend [illegible] a social gathering of tax sinners or generally bad characters, that you didn't even want to be strange. But truly Jesus would be [illegible] What a new Kingdom! Jesus' seeking compassion, and forgiveness and is [illegible] of Heaven's power of life and death in his Calipso gesture—could only depict a.

Compassion is seen as a high virtue now, was called a being dragged and [illegible]. Many people would like to be regarded as compassionate—new politicians and businessmen. Also in the end, each of sometimes self-limited, in the story of the [illegible] who [illegible] [illegible] [illegible] of the mind, and who cried about the life or price that compassion was more than self-will.

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Dengue cases down

By Blanche S. Rivera

DESPITE the onslaught of the rainy season, dengue cases in the country dropped by 50 percent from January to June, the Department of Health reported yesterday.

Only 3,621 cases including 33 deaths were monitored by the DOH's National Epidemic Sentinel Surveillance System from Jan. 1 to June 15.

"A downtrend on the number of cases for each region was observed at the start of the second quarter except for region VI (Western Visayas), region XI (Southern Mindanao) and ARMM (Autonomous Region of Muslim Mindanao)," the DOH report said.

Metro Manila registered the highest number of cases with 810, Southern Mindanao with 609, Central Visayas with 326 and Central Luzon with 324.

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'SCOURGE OF HUMANKIND'

Terror still a big threat, Asean told

JAKARTA – Terrorists cells operating across boundaries in Southeast Asia remain a huge threat to the region despite renewed efforts to combat them, Australian Foreign Minister Alexander Downer said Thursday.

Downer, in Jakarta to attend a regional security forum, earlier signed a declaration with the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (Asean) to cooperate in the fight against terrorism.

The document "shows our shared commitment to fight this scourge of humankind," said Indonesian Foreign Minister Hassan Wirayuda, who signed on behalf of Asean.

Downer said the declaration "reflects our shared determination to work together as a region to eliminate international terrorism and reinforces the unprecedented levels of cooperation Australia has developed with Asean countries in fighting this threat."

But he warned Asean countries Brunei, Cambodia, Indonesia, Laos, Malaysia, Myanmar, the Philippines, Singapore, Thailand and Vietnam not to let complacency set in.

The al-Qaeda-linked Jemaah Islamiyah, the Abu Sayyaf in the Philippines and the separatist Moro Islamic Liberation Front (MILF) could still wreak havoc in the region, Downer told reporters.

The Abu Sayyaf is a small group cut off unlike Jemaah Islamiyah, which has links to Osama bin Laden's al-Qaeda network, and the MILF has been waging a 26-year-old rebellion in the southern Philippines.

"I think it is naive to wish them away, to think that these organizations have been defeated and dispersed," Downer told reporters.

While these groups' strength had been downgraded "they still have the capacity to cause enormous damage and kill large numbers of people," he added.

Tougher action

Asean countries must take tougher action against those groups because they see "euphoria and complacency or weakness," he said.

The bird-eight bali bombings of October 2002, in which 88 of the 202 dead were Australians, showed that individual nations could not combat terrorism on their own, he said.

Australia and Indonesia mounted a unique joint investigation into the Bali blasts, which were staged by Jemaah Islamiyah.

The Australians provided forensic and other technical support, such as retrieving deleted files from the laptop of suspected Imam Samudra and tracing mobile phone calls.

Courts in Bali have convicted 23 people for the bombings, including three who were sentenced to death.

Counter-terrorism meeting

Australia and Indonesia co-hosted a regional counter-terrorism meeting in Bali in February. Australia has provided most of the funds for an anti-terror training school, which will be opened tomorrow in the eastern Indonesian city of Semarang.

Downer praised Indonesia for its crackdown but said more cooperation was needed on police assistance and military and intelligence gathering.

Amrozi was meeting "clinkopat pastors" last week Thursday and was due to sign a similar renunciation declaration with Wasia.

AFP

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101 Pinoys to be repatriated from Kuwait

By Martin R. Martel

THE LABOR department yesterday announced that 101 stranded Filipino workers in Kuwait will be repatriated sometime this week.

Labor Secretary Patricia Sto. Tomas said that the 101 were among the 263 stranded Filipinos, mostly domestic helpers, who were temporarily sheltered at the Philippine Overseas Labor Office center in Kuwait.

In a statement, she said that the repatriation of the 101 came after undergoing the documentation and verification process by Kuwait's Department of Domestic Workers and Administration.

"The Kuwaiti government will provide them plane tickets for their repatriation...unless they are respondents to criminal complaints, they will be eligible for departure..." she added.

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DAR eyes asset swap

By Norman Bordadora

WANT a sequestered prime property in Ortigas Center in exchange for a vague land in Bataan? Try!

The Department of Agrarian Reform has proposed an asset swap scheme to compensate big estate landlords whose huge landholdings will be re-distributed to farmer tenants under the Comprehensive Agrarian Reform Program.

The DAR has offered the alternative compensation scheme for landowners to trade up for the limited funds of the government's land reform program.

"Let's say we offer 1,000 square meters of government sequestered prime commercial land in Ortigas, Pasig City in exchange for the equivalent value of the landowner's property here," said Agrarian Reform Undersecretary Ricardo Ariñana in a statement from Iloilo City.

Agrarian Reform Secretary Jose Mari Pimentel has said that the remaining 20 percent of agricultural land up for re-distribution by the DAR before 2008 represents the most expensive private lands, mostly planted to sugarcane and maize.

The Land Bank of the Philippines has estimated that the land reform program needs an additional P62 billion to acquire and distribute the remaining 845,000 hectares of agricultural land.

"Another option being considered is to liquefy the sequestered assets through securitization," Ariñana said.

The DAR is expected to receive P22 billion out of the proceeds of fund assets that the Presidential Commission on Good Government had sequestered on suspicion that they were ill-gotten.

The DAR estimates that it needs up to P1.86 billion to cover the remaining undistributed lands and ensure their continued productivity through the effective delivery of support services such as farm-to-market roads, bridges, post-harvest and irrigation facilities.

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Let us join hands and do our share to create a strong republic and prosperous tomorrow for our country. It is a daunting task, but if we focus on the same goal, the Filipino can.

Let every Filipino in every Barangay support her Excellency's call for unity. Let us put past recriminations to rest and move forward.

The Liga ng mga Barangay sa Pilipinas
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JAMES MARTY L. LIM

SPORTS

E-mail sr_sports@inquirer.com.ph
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ASIAN GRAND PRIX

Gabito secures bronze

By Marc Anthony Reyes

LERMA Bukaneses-Gabito bagged a hard-earned bronze in the women's long jump, while the Philippines earned three more easy third-place finishes yesterday in the third and final leg of the Asian Athletics Grand Prix at the Rizal Memorial Stadium.

Gabito came up with a 6.11-meter leap on her fourth attempt to tie India's 32 Binder and wound up taking the bronze for having a better second-best jump. Previous leg winner Liang Shuang of China clinched the gold with a 6.17m effort, while Jayalaxmi Anjanappa of Uzbekistan settled for the silver (6.16m).

"I was in better condition in Sri Lanka, which is more lenient here I was cheered by my countrymen," said Gabito, who also won the bronze in Colombo, where she officially surpassed the Olympic qualifying mark.

GABITO kicks up sand on the lands she bronze in the long jump.

The 29-year-old Gabito said she was bothered by the hot weather.

"I was really aiming for the record because that means much more to me," said Gabito, who searched in officials measured her mark and last try hoping to at least better the 6.16m mark she accomplished last weekend.

Upstart Lilibeth Tolosan nailed the second bronze for the country in the women's 1,500m by just finishing the race in a field of four runners. Ayngaran's Tolosa Bonsaru and Kazakhstan's Svetlana Ludushkina took the gold and silver, respectively. National team member Mercedita Manipol delived finals.

Bonsaru clocked 4:20.00, Ludushkina 4:22.59, while Tolosa, egged on by the big crowd at the stands witnessing the event supported by Mikasa Philippine Sports Commission, arrived nine

BONSARU, A23

TONIGHT (July 2) 2004 UEFA Euro Cup 12 midnight, 4 a.m. live via satellite. Latest images (semifinals): 12 noon, Mike's Dragon Sandwich; 7 p.m.; Sun Sports — it's down to the last eight in this event's decision and the final four are this week.

SOLO 2004 US Women's Open Schedule (if it's on TV)— Tournament round goes under way from 10:30 p.m. Manila Time (MT).

Schedules subject to change without prior notice.

Compiled by L. Mangosan

Kings seek repeat victory vs Barakos

DAMONH Hsieh of Red Bull runs into a right Elevators defense in this bit of action in Game 1.

Portugal defeats Dutch eleven, advances to 2004 Euro finals

A28

SAMSUNG AMATEUR

Miñoza leads Pagunsan

Compiled by L. Mangosan

GMA no transition president after all

Front page 1

the official said.

According to the official, this was the position taken in "a series of discussions" held in Malacañang for Ms Arroyo's State of the Nation Address (Sona) at the joint opening of the new Congress on July 26.

The planned constitutional amendment will be one of the main points in the Sona, the official said, adding that while 2007 was "a highly optimistic option," 2010 was "more feasible and realistic."

The other Palace official said offering the parliamentary shift as early as 2007 would also pose "legal problems."

"One was elected to a term of six years, and (if you cut it), One would be denying the people's mandate," the official said.

This is a departure from Ms Arroyo's position during the campaign period.

Right after May 10

On Feb. 28, Speaker Jose de Venecia Jr., the principal proponent of amending the Constitution, quoted Ms Arroyo as saying that she was amenable to stepping down in 2007 to allow a transition to the parliamentary system.

Ms Arroyo confirmed this, and while ensuring the support of El Shaddai leader Bro. Mike Velarde during the campaign, she entered into an agreement with him that she would convene a constitutional convention "immediately after the May 10 elections" to undertake the Charter amendments.

Demands, however, said the President's statement in Butuan yesterday was "not inconsistent" with his earlier position because she would still see to it that changes toward the parliamentary system would be taken during her incumbency.

"You cannot have a shift in three years," Demeniño insisted.

Neither did the President make a reference to amending the Constitution in her inaugural address on Wednesday.

Speaking plainly

"Let me speak plainly. When I step down six years from now, this will be only 10 point legacy," she said, referring to her program for a better Philippines.

But she said she had "a burden to govern for the clear pull of the sovereign people."

Asked to comment on the estimation of one of the memos in Arroyo's campaign platform, Bro. Eduardo said this memo only—that she was leaving it to Congress to decide when the changes should take effect.

"She already stated her position. That is a separate consideration," he further said.

Earlier, an administration official said it would be naive to believe that Ms Arroyo would agree to giving up three years of her presidency just like that.

The source said Ms Arroyo was possibly amenable to stepping down in 2007, only to run for parliament and vie for the position of prime minister.

But with the midterm elections set for senatorial rival in the last election, stepping down appears to be farfetched from the President's mind.

THE FIRST day of President Arroyo's full-six-year term is spent partly in Butuan City where she speaks at the Urios College gym.

'Dubya' phones Gloria: Congratulations, thanks

Front page 1

Bush also thanked Ms Arroyo "for her strong support in the war against terror and the Philippines' contributions to help the Iraqi interim government improve the security situation in Iraq," McClellan said.

Also yesterday, US officials pledged to continue helping President Arroyo battle terrorists and forge a peace accord with Muslim guerrillas, saying the Philippines' economy are only prone to stability.

Mr Arroyo, one of Washington's most important Asian allies, was sworn in Wednesday for a new six-year term with a promise to end decades-long Muslim and Marxist insurgencies and ease socio-priced poverty by by creating up to 10 million jobs.

In a report which Muslim rebels resent, America's anti-terrorist efforts, she vowed not even before her new term of office by banking the US-led war on terror, deploying a peacekeeping contingent to Iraq and sending US troops to train Filipino soldiers.

US Overseas Affairs Secretary Anthony Principi, who led an American delegation to Ms Arroyo's inauguration, said Washington will continue helping her fight terrorists and forge peace with insurgents, specifically the Moro Islamic Liberation Front, which has been fighting for Muslim self-rule in the south.

During a press conference, Principi said the Philippine economy could only flourish in a stable atmosphere.

Former battle zones

American officials have pledged to help Manila develop more in former battle zones in the south since a peace deal is finalized. The rebels and the government signed a ceasefire last year and have been negotiating a comprehensive peace agreement.

CHEERING Colasans crowd around Jaime Cuino, one of the representatives of US President Bush to the Arroyo inaugural in Cebu City, and he feels right at home.

MORE support for the anti-terror campaign of the Arroyo administration, declares US Secretary of Veterans Affairs Anthony Principi, the special envoy of US President Bush to President Arroyo's inaugural during a press conference. With him is US Ambassador Francis Ricciardone.

The US military will also continue providing combat training and other assistance to Filipino soldiers in dealing with terror groups, US Ambassador to the Philippines Francis Ricciardone said, but he ruled out reopening American military bases here that were closed down in 1992.

"We're going to stand with her in terms of improving the effectiveness of the Armed Forces of the Philippines in dealing with people who insist on fomenting and murdering," Ricciardone told a news conference.

Presence

US Pacific commander Admiral Thomas Fargo, who also attended Ms Arroyo's swearing-in, had expressed concern over the presence of Jemaah Islamiyah militants in the south and discussed the problem with Philippine security officials.

Al-Qaida-linked Abu Sayyaf guerrillas, who have targeted Americans, are also active in the south.

'Would you concede if you know you were cheated?'

Front page 1

he ventured out of his Greenhills home for a little socializing.

Poe turned up at the oath-taking of Senator-elect Richard Gordon, deposed President Joseph Estrada.

The actor-son wasted no time to woo new Senate legends, his turning mate under the Bandayan ng Naghahalong Pilipino. Clad in a barong Tagalog, he appeared composed. He smiled in acknowledge friends and allies and even clapped his hands after each dance number performed by school children.

Poe even stood, to wave at the crowd when a city official called him the "real" winner of the May 10 presidential election. But mostly he kept to himself.

No thanks

After the program, Poe shook hands with many supporters and headed straight for his car as media men gave chase. A reporter overheard him saying, "Forgive me. I hope you understand."

But as Malacañang sees it, normalization with the camp of Poe may be helpful but not all that necessary.

Presidential spokesperson Ignacio Bunye expressed so much in a briefing yesterday. Peace with the opposition would make things easier for President Arroyo, he said, but it certainly did not mean her goals were unreachable without their cooperation.

Despite unabated grumbling from rival groups, the President was serene about her position, Bunye said. "She has a very clear, strong and solid mandate from the people and she will (get to or act) this mandate."

'Remained optimistic'

Ms Arroyo would continue to reach out to her opponents in the last election, he added, and she "remained optimistic" that they would accept within her term the offer to work together.

"She is not asking for blind obedience," Bunye noted. "In the very least, the President is expecting some of partners—that we agree on basic principles."

He explained that Ms Arroyo's reconciliation policy was "driven by the people—not by the media or politicians." To heal divisions and bring the nation behind her agenda for the next six years was "the whole point" of the policy, he said.

Take care of Erap

Ejercito's promotion, however, was unequivocal. Shortly after taking his oath, the mayor gave the impression his one condition for unity with the Arroyo administration: "They have to take care of the Erap issue first."

Ejercito is detained as a rule-of-law camp on charges of plunder. The family of the ousted leader has long urged the government to put him under house arrest.

Ejercito has not accepted Poe's loss to the polls, either. "I DO respect totally wala, if the people really voted for her, the decision of terms—over just one—should have been agreed, to ease any doubt."

The other opposition leaders present at Ejercito's oath-taking included Sen. Juan Ponce Enrile, Makati Mayor Jejomar Binay former vice Francisco "Kit" Tatad and actor Eddie Gutierrez.

There was no sign of Sen. Jose "Jinggoy" Estrada, the mayor's half-brother. The senator had supported several local politicians who ran against Ejercito's team. Nevertheless, he was invited to yesterday's event, a clear sign of the mayor's mood.

Expensive protest

Ejercito had only kind words for Senator Estrada. "We are brothers. We have the same blood in the end, we will be on the same side."

The PPI camp has until July 26 to file a formal electoral protest. It is bound to be a protracted and expensive legal process that could cost at least P50 million.

Poe's lawyer, Rufus Rodriguez, said his client had not discussed with him her next move. "What's we will support any decision he will make," Rodriguez said.

The lawyer explained that a presidential contender could file a protest in the Supreme Court, which shall constitute itself into the Presidential Electoral Tribunal, within 30 days after his or her winning rival is proclaimed by Congress.

President Arroyo was proclaimed the winner at 9:35 a.m. on June 29.

Rodriguez said one thing a protest would have to pay a filing fee of P50,000 and make a deposit of P 100,000. If he asks for a recount, he will also have to pay P500 per precinct whose ballots will be examined.

Legal fees, too

There are at least 300,000 precincts in the entire country. Assuming that Poe questions the results of one-third of the total precincts, that's at least 90,000 precincts...or P50 million.

There are also legal fees. Aside from Rodriguez, lawyers Homero Demetrios, Avelino "Abe" Cruz and Jesus Bellosillo are Poe's lead counsels.

PPI still paints 'em in white: he attended the oath-taking of Mayor JV Ejercito of San Juan.

The WORLD

Edited by Lawrence B. Quirico

US forces attack Zarqawi hideout, kill 7, wound 17

FALLUJAH—At least seven people were killed and 17 wounded in the first major US military strike in Iraq since the occupation ended, hospital sources said Thursday, and four others died in roadside blasts in the capital.

A senior military official, however, said the overnight air strike on a suspected hideout of al-Qaida operative Abu Musaab al-Zarqawi's network in the flashpoint city of Falluja and a subsequent firestorm left between 18 and 35 dead.

US-led military forces have carried out several air raids on suspected hideouts of Jordanian Islamist Zarqawi in Falluja, 50 km west of Baghdad.

But the attack on Wednesday night was the first since the interim Iraqi government became sovereign on June 28.

"Seven dead bodies were transported to the hospital and 17 wounded were admitted, including women and children," said an employee at the registration counter who asked to remain anonymous.

The toll was confirmed by Dr Soha Had, the head of the hospital.

But US Brig. Gen. Mark Hertling, deputy director for multinational operations in Iraq, estimated a higher toll.

"We believe 18 to 35 people were killed, not the ambulation as that they would (as foreign fighters)," he said. "We have strong intelligence to believe suicide bombers were among those killed."

Locals said a plane dropped a bomb on a house in the Jbail district of southeast Falluja at about midnight.

An exchange of fire followed between US marines and militants inside the Sunni rebel bastion which is a hotbed of anti-American sentiment.

Hertling said the US-led multinational forces in Iraq conducted a strike on a "known safe house" of the Zarqawi network.

The operation was "based on multiple confirmations of Iraqi and multinational intelligence," Hertling said in a statement.

The military said precision weapons in the attack, but Hertling declined to specify the sort of arsenal deployed.

It is a sign of Washington's desperation not to catch the outlaw, who has been accused of numerous atrocities in Iraq, it boosted a reward for his capture on Wednesday to $25 million from $10 million.

The same amount was on offer for ousted president Saddam Hussein, who was captured in December, and remains up for grabs for al-Qaida terror network chief Osama bin Laden.

Iraqi police said this week they were holding a man who confessed for Islamic fugitive bin the US military moved swiftly to do so in was Zarqawi.

The multinational forces have blamed Zarqawi for at least 80 attacks in Iraq, including March 2 suicide bombings in the cities of Karbala and Baghdad that killed some 270 people, on the bloodiest day of the insurgency.

Zarqawi heads his own militant faction named Tawhid and Jihad (Unification and Holy War) which has claimed responsibility for two huge car bombings in Iraq last month as well as the beheading of a South Korean hostage.

In Iraq's ongoing insurgency despite Monday's official end of the US-led occupation, at least two people died when a senior Iraqi ministry official was targeted in a roadside bombing in Baghdad, hospital sources said.

And investors Iraqi stock killed and a woman has a leg in another roadside blast, this time aimed at a US military convoy in the center of the capital, police said.

The blast went off as the convoy of three Humvees passed on Sadun district, police lieutenant Haidar Abdul Sattar said. AFP

A HOME Kong flag burns over thousands of people marching along a street in Hong Kong, July 1. At least 250,000 people joined the march to vent anger at Beijing's decision to deny the former British colony the right to elect its next leader AFP

HK demands more freedom from Beijing

HONG KONG—Hundreds of thousands of protesters marched through the streets of Hong Kong Thursday to demand greater democracy and send a defiant message to the territory's communist rulers in Beijing.

Organizers said over 350,000 people gathered despite intense heat on the seventh anniversary of the former British colony's return to Chinese control to vent anger over Beijing's decision to deny Hong Kong universal suffrage.

The unofficial final figures were drawn on the turnout of half a million or a similar demonstration last year, although this year's protest was reported to be just as politically charged.

Last year's march, in protest at unpopular anti-subversion legislation that many feared would curtail civil liberties, was also seen as an expression of frustration over the government's handling of the SARS crisis and the economy.

Beijing-appointed Chief Executive Tung Chee hwa was forced to cut a humiliating stand down after the 2003 demonstration, plunging his popularity to new depths from which he has yet to recover.

Tung earlier Thursday oversaw a lion-lady ceremony to mark Hong Kong's return to Chinese rule in which senior Chinese leaders were personally absent. Previous ceremonies have attracted President Hu Jintao and his predecessor Jiang Zemin.

Although there is not the same pressure cooker political climate ahead of this year's rally, the protest could still prove a major embarrassment for China in its attempts to stifle the drive for democracy. AFP

After 7 years, Cassini makes historic orbit around Saturn

PASADENA—Nasa's Cassini spacecraft slipped through Saturn's ringy and lone orbit on Wednesday so it settled in to make the most detailed study ever of the sixth planet from the sun.

Project scientists from 17 countries swapped into wild cheers when Cassini squeaked chemistry after 7 years, that it had completed a delicate 96 minute maneuver that required the trunk-sized probe to dodge through Saturn's rings and sling itself into orbit.

Cassini, which traveled for seven years to reach Saturn, will spend at least the next four years studying the planet, its rings and some of its 31 known moons. Much of that time will be dedicated to Titan, one of the solar system's largest and most intriguing moons, with an atmosphere and composition that resembles conditions on Earth.

"I can tell you it feels awfully good to be in orbit around the Lord of the Rings," Charles Elachi, director of Nasa's Jet Propulsion Laboratory, said at a press conference.

The $3 billion mission has been hailed as a model for multinational space exploration. Cassini's key maneuver was the second International space mission on Wednesday night. It came hours after astronauts from the International Space Station repaired a broken gyroscope during a space walk.

"This is a stellar evening. We're certain to learn scores more relevant things," Nasa Administrator Sean O'Keefe said in a phone call to project scientists, in which he thanked European and Italian space agency partners.

The Saturn mission has gone flawlessly from Cassini's launch in October of 1997 to the end of the orbital orbital insertion maneuver. The spacecraft completed the maneuver within one second of the schedule scientists had set for it more than seven years and 3.5 billion miles ago.

Cassini could provide a major boost for Nasa, which is still riding high from the impressive job done by its twin Mars probes, Spirit and Opportunity. The two robotic geologists have spent nearly six months exploring Mars and have made key discoveries about the presence of past water there.

The Nasa and European scientists, some of whom have spent their entire careers working on the Cassini mission, next must sort the the first data and images from the probe, which were expected to arrive at about 8 a.m. on Thursday.

Scientists hoped to see objects as big as skyscrapers from the early pictures.

During Cassini's first orbit, it was expected to make its closest pass to Saturn of the entire mission and, it was hoped, send back images that would redefine man's understanding of the planet and its rings. Besides

ARTISTS' rendition shows the Cassini spacecraft approaching the planet. A glint of light behind the magnetometer boom at the bottom of the spacecraft is the sun.

Vietnam admits having small bird flu outbreaks

HANOI—A Vietnamese official admitted Thursday that the country had several small-scale outbreaks of bird flu in the months since it declared itself free of bird flu at the end of March—though none of them were reported until this week.

Word of the outbreaks emerged only after authorities announced Wednesday that there were new fierce spread bird flu in nine southern Mekong Delta provinces.

Nguyen Xuan Binh, deputy director of the regional animal health center in Ho Chi Minh City, said small outbreaks affecting individual farms took place in April in the southern provinces of Dong Thap province, and in May in southern's Vinh Long province and central Quang Ngai province.

In June, larger-scale outbreaks, involving thousands of infected birds, were reported in three other Mekong Delta provinces...Soc Lieu, Tien Giang and Can Tho, he said.

"The clusters [in the past of outbreaks has gradually increased," Binh said.

Binh denied that the government was covering up any major problems by not reporting the outbreaks earlier, saying they were isolated cases that were rapidly contained.

"There were only small isolated outbreaks in those provinces and officials quickly...put them under quarantine and culled all the sick birds," he said.

Earlier the was the lethal H5N1 strain of avian influenza ravaged Asia, killing or forcing the slaughter of more than 100 million poultry in the region. The disease also jumped to people, killing 16 people in Vietnam and eight in Thailand.

The bird flu ferried Vietnam to cull 45 million poultry—about 15 percent of the country's entire stock. The government announced earlier this year that the disease caused $83 million in losses.

Vietnam declared it was free of bird flu at the end of March, despite warnings from international groups that it was premature to assume the virus had disappeared from the country's poultry stock.

Groups including the World Health Organization and the UN's Food and Agriculture Organization urged Vietnam to be cautious in overlooking its poultry industry.

In the latest flu flare-up, poultry samples from hens in the three Mekong Delta provinces were found to be positive with the H5 strain of the bird flu and officials were still checking whether it was the more lethal N1 variant, Binh said. AP

Free access to Star e-paper

MALAYSIAN readers and readers around the world can now have free access to The Star's paper. From June 1 until Aug. 31, the general public can access the electronic version of The Star by registering for a free MyStar account. All the general 400,000 MyStar members will have automatic access to the e-paper.

An exact duplicate of the print edition of The Star, the e-Paper was given a soft launch in March 2004 and has been under beta testing by a selected group of readers since then.

The Star e-paper is accessible at anytime and from any part of the world through any Internet-enabled personal computer or notebook via a standard Web browser like Microsoft Internet Explorer 5.5 and above. Other browsers supported include Mozilla Firefox on Windows, Macintosh and Linux platforms.

The Star e-paper uses technology developed by Olive Software which allows users to read back issues up to a week and provides interactive features like keyword-based search and customization. Other newspapers which are using Olive Software include National Post of Canada, Daily Telegraph, Times of India and Washington Post.

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Saturn and its rings. This represents the reflection of some

Israel to re-route West Bank barrier

JERUSALEM—Israel said on Wednesday it would re-route part of its disputed West Bank barrier after its highest court ordered changes to prevent Palestinians losing out on their farms, schools and clinics.

A three-judge panel said in unanimous thumbs-down to a planned 30-km segment of the barrier would set guidelines for hearings on around 20 Palestinian petitions against other sections of the network of fences and walls.

The defense ministry promised to show parts of the barrier based on the landmark high court finding that Israel's need for security did not allow it to give short shrift to the rights of the nearby Palestinian population.

"The re-planning of these sections will be based on the principles set by the high court, namely the proper balance between security and humanitarian considerations," the ministry said in a statement.

It noted that court said Israel had a right to build a barrier on humanitarian and for security reasons.

Palestinians call the barrier a disguised attempt to annex occupied territory they want for a future state since it often snakes well into the West Bank to take in Jewish settlements. Israel's government vows never to yield under any peace deal.

Israel says the barrier, 309 km of which have been built, aims to keep out Palestinian suicide bombers who have killed nearly Israeli civilians and killed thousands of people.

In 10 days the International Court of Justice in The Hague is expected to issue an advisory ruling on the barrier's legality as requested by the United Nations. Reuters

THAT'S AN SUV, NOT A SUBI

SUV owner Pat Campanella talks with towing company owner Devin Bisbo about how to get his car out of a pond, June 28, in Honolulu. Campanella's wife drove over the pond on Saturday while learning to drive. AP

Camilla now part of royal household

LONDON—Camilla Parker Bowles, the long-term partner of Britain's heir to the throne Prince Charles, has become an official part of his household with some of her expenses over out of his budget, figures showed Wednesday.

Accounts for the Duchy of Cornwall—the collection of various estates which provides Charles with his income—showed that the prince now pays for a series of part-time employees in the Parker Bowles.

This includes two people to help oversee her lessons as well as a driver and a gardener.

While seemingly insignificant in itself, the announcement marks a further step towards formalizing the status between Charles and the companion he has known for decades, a relationship which has divided Britain.

It is taken as read that Charles, 55, would like as one day marry the 56-year old Parker Bowles, but it is an extremely delicate situation given both their pasts and the prince's constitutional positions.

Charles was previously married to Princess Diana, who died in a car crash in Paris in August 1997, a year after the couple divorced and two years after Parker Bowles divorced her own husband.

Charles and Camilla had dated when younger and maintained an intermittent relationship even during their respective marriages.

The issue of whether the royal have ever met in a divorcee has posed constitutional experts for years, since the British monarch is the titular head of the Anglican church and thus officially supportive for beyond moral reproach.

Constitutions: Anglicans have long expressed opposition to Charles and Parker Bowles marrying as adulterers, given their well-documented adultery with each other. AFP

WorldBriefs

Bosnian Serbs ousted

BANJALUKA— The Most powerful Bosnian Serbs on Wednesday for failing to arrest top war crimes fugitive Radovan Karadzic, sacking 60 senior officials in a major escalation of pressure for his handover. Those removed by Western envoy Paddy Ashdown included Speaker Dragan Kalinic, who heads the Serb Democratic Party founded by Karadzic. Interior Minister Dragan Djeric and other ministers, police officials, mayors and parliamentarians. Karadzic has been branded one of the world's most wanted men and the Bosnian Serb wartime leader has been indicted by the UN war crimes tribunal in The Hague over the 1992-95 Bosnian conflict that killed almost 200,000 people. Most have bloodlines. "(Bosnia's Serb republic) has been in a grip of a small band of corrupt politicians and criminals for far too long," Ashdown, a former British politician, told a news conference. Reuters

Saudi kills militant

RIYADH— Saudi security forces killed another of the kingdom's most wanted Islamic extremists in the latest shootout in the capital as clashes scuffled around already after its militants surrender. A week after the authorities declared that Al Qaeda suspect Ali's ethic reported would be rounded up, police said Wednesday's gun battle killed Abdullah Mohammed Rashid al Rashid, "one of the most dangerous suspects in the kingdom, who is accused of undertaking all the al Qaeda groups in Saudi Arabia." Rashid figured number 20 on an interior ministry list of most wanted. The English-language Arab News reported Thursday that he had taught at Riyadh's prestigious Institute of Imam Mohammad ibn Saud University, a position gone up before disappearing several years ago. AFP

Largest reef sanctuary

SYDNEY—Australia's Great Barrier Reef became the world's biggest protected marine network on Thursday, as two environmental groups hope countries in Mexico and Central America will copy it a bid to save their endangered coral reefs. Australia has slapped a ban on fishing and shipping in a third of reef, the planet's largest living structure, protecting one of its most crucial attractions which is threatened by overfishing, pollution and higher temperatures. "It forms part of the reasons why I'm the future of the reef. It's an incredibly important step to ensure that the reef is there as a major resource store, and as it is a national icon for the country," said Howard Hopkins, spokesperson for the Great Barrier Reef Marine Park. Nearly two million tourists and the world-heavy-hitter reef will Queensland state in Australia's northeast, injecting around $2.1 billion into the economy each year. Reuters

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Right stuff

EDITORIAL

There could be several reasons why President Macapagal-Arroyo has been reticent about changes in the Cabinet. The first may be her insistence on not having other people dictate the political timing crucial to the success of the early part of her new administration. Another reason may be to forestall the feverish attempts of local bigwigs to extort Cabinet posts as payback for their support during the elections. The third may be that she doesn't want to face grueling sessions before the Commission on Appointments, and so she wants to ensure that any possible appointments will face smooth sailing in Congress. The fourth may be due to simple obstinacy: she simply isn't in the mood to tinker changes, and isn't inclined to do anything until she is in the mood to do it.

We cannot comment on the President's political timing. But if she wants to resist pressure from political allies, she should hold fast on that resolve. If she prefers to keep her hands close to her chest while she remains the lame-duck 13th Congress, that is well within her prerogatives. However if her inclination to be silent reflects a sulky obstinacy, then she should muster the self-control to rein in her emotions.

The problem is, the President doesn't have the luxury of time. The country is impatient for both promises and achievements. The selection of the new Cabinet—both who will stay and who will be replaced—is a crucial part of this. Either she will send the signal that, despite her administration's agenda, it will be more of the same; or, she will give a big push to her efforts by impressing the public with a thoroughly, and unusual, Cabinet reshuffle.

A complete political animal, Ms Arroyo, like all presidents, will undoubtedly take political into consideration when making Cabinet appointments. But a president can pay off political debts properly while making sensible and competent appointments. There are the key words: sensible and competent. Neither we nor the country assist in nor tinker servers and obviously unsuitable figures retained or added to the Cabinet merely to please political supporters.

Unless the President resorts to a dictatorship or an attempt to perpetuate herself in power by other means, she has nothing to be feared on new people her place in history. Where that would be depends in part on whom she decides to appoint and not appoint in the coming days.

What is clear is that some people have to go. What went politically palatable—though not popular—after John II isn't necessarily still so today.

The administration surely knows who among the President's men and women enjoy the confidence of the public. It therefore knows, as well, who are political and administrative liabilities or her. The administration needs to approach the task of weeding out the unpopular, inconsequence, and ineffective in a surgical manner. Clinically objectively, efficiently.

After all, since the President has asked the people to do their part, she must do hers. It starts with not making cliches. It begins with separating the good from the bad. If she cannot tell them apart, then there is a serious disjoint between the way she sees things and the way the public does.

The President has demonstrated the capability to pick capable people. She has also been known to keep people in positions of power for unlikely political reasons. The public doesn't merely expect more of the former and none of the latter; it demands it.

The composition of her Cabinet will send a powerful message, one that will be required if the next, crucial step, is to take place: to adopt the same rigorous criteria in vetting the 11,000 or more appointments the President will be making in the coming weeks and months.

Only a Cabinet member, appointed for reasons that are above board, and who has manifest competence and integrity can muster the moral authority and political will necessary to whip the bureaucracy under him into shape. Only a President who has shown a sensitivity to the need to balance political pragmatism with executive wisdom can muster the will and support required to make the tough choices she says she intends to make. And the pursuit of the policies she intends to put in place.

Ms Arroyo has proven that she can make sound appointments, but she has not made enough. She needs to make many more. She can make them—unless, this early, she is held hostage by the demands of the dealer increasingly being given her by her words it at all.

People losing faith in electoral tribunals?

AS I SEE IT

Neal H. Cruz

THE HUNTING season last Wednesday, June 30, inauguration day of President Macapagal-Arroyo. Typhoon "Igme" swept through the country, dumped heavy rains, flooded huge areas, downed trees, electric posts, houses and a huge billboard that wrecked cars in Quezon City. Some say it vindicated a public works act (or GMA), blacked out many areas, caused hundreds of millions of pesos worth of damage to crops and property, killed several persons and sent tens of thousands of families from their homes to evacuation centers. It was as if God was punishing the Filipinos. Why?

While hundreds of thousands of Filipinos were suffering, their President was having the time of her life being inaugurated to a new six-year term in Cebu. She had announced that the inauguration would be "austere and simple," but the 5,000 dancers and extensive roses are the stage show cost the taxpayers P200,000, with thousands more flowers in the capital. How many squatters will that austerity feed?

The latest party cost P4.6 million, according to unverified reports. How many homes for the homeless will that build? And that was supposed to be "austere and simple"? I dread to think how much it would have cost had it not been "austere and simple." It would probably have bankrupted the nation.

The cost of the party did not include the clothes, hotel accommodations, food and drinks, karaoke clothes, and allowances of thousands of upojes, ex, public officials who had to fly from Manila and other provinces to Cebu for the inauguration. They had to be there to be seen by her, otherwise they would be in danger of losing the government reorganization. The job seekers and fortune hunters had to be seen there clapping and cheering so that GMA won't forget them when she starts making appointments.

All those expenses were charged against their pockets but from the budgets of their respective offices, of course, meaning from the taxpayers' again. But to say the goodbye for the Philippine Air force C-130s that flew the politicians and students, public officials, camp followers and cronies to Cebu. And yet we are supposed to line up in our stocks in a huge budget deficit and a gargantuan foreign debt, and GMA is planning to impose more and bigger taxes.

Construction of pedestrian overpasses, roads and bridges, schoolhouses and other projects that were in full blast during the election campaign has been stopped. Naturally the people have already voted, and there is no more money for them to money for people in opposition-led patrolling.

Even the dogs of Cebu were rounded up for the inauguration, as if they, too, would present. But the real reason, quipped a Cebu politician, was: "So there be nothing to trip him on going on Magnolia, nuda nung lapse sa mga asu nanun."

Speaking of dogs, it seems that dogs are bad omens for the Fernando Poes. Labor and now. The original Fernando Poe, a big macho man who survived nine bouts of Bataan death marches, died in a coma when infected him with rabies. Fernando Poe Jr., the King, was also done in by dogs, said a Pinoy Lacson sympathizer. Three survivors, the initials of whose surnames spell: RPF. Dagdag for dog's sake. Even survivors of her defeat, he said.

And speaking of FPJ, it seems he always misses his chance. For example, the police dispersal of his followers with water cannons and tear gas last Tuesday would have been a golden occasion for him if he had been there. But he arrived after they had already been hosed down and scattered. Instead of addressing his followers, he went to a fast-food restaurant and ensued there for an hour and then left without saying anything, his followers wanted to hear him address them and castigate "this brutality government," just like the Marcos martial law regime," but they were disappointed.

When a missed opportunity, a photograph of FPJ being hosed with water cannons. What a photograph that would have made. FPJ taking arms with his followers, bravely getting their teeth as they are hit by blasts of water from the water cannons of fascist police. It would have made the front pages of all the local papers, the television newscasts, and even the international press. Who can forget the pictures of Cheer Bears, Lawrence Tarkada and other heroes each linked arms enduring the water cannons of the Marcos regime? Of stars Diana sticks to the mindset of many people because of that.

Just then another picture of a standing new FPJ, Ruby Rowling from his open bosom of the tear gas, addressing his loyal followers. What epitomize FPJ onward attitude.

FPJ will miss another golden opportunity if he follows the advice of some of his leaders not to file an election protest. It would be useless, they said. The Presidential Electoral Tribunal is very slow, the six-year term would be over before it comes to a decision, the process is so expensive, they said. Besides, members of the Supreme Court, who will compose the Presidential Electoral Tribunal, are politicians of GMA. They were the ones who put her in Malacañang and she was the one who put many of them in the Court, so what can you expect from them?

The people should bring their heads in shame for this lack of trust, faith and confidence in the highest court of the land. An election protest in the electoral tribunals does take an eternity to resolve. The slow wheels of justice grind exceedingly slow in the election cases. Further, but the Supreme Court has shown many times that it can act swiftly on a case if it wants to. Why can't it do the same thing to a poll protest that involves no less than the highest position in the land and the will of the people?

A fine judge and finer human being

PASSION FOR REASON

Raul C. Pangalangan

ON JULY 14, 2004, Justice Jose C. Vitug retires from the Supreme Court, closing a noble career as a judge and, I hope, counting an even more glorious life as a law teacher and sage to the profession.

I first encountered Justice Vitug when he lectured at the UP Law Center, where he was a most effective and engaging law reviewer in Taxation, who sold his then-extensive simplicity and cheer, brought to life a highly technical subject.

As a young lawyer, he had been the protégé of the venerable Justice Abe Reyes to whom he was a legal assistant in the Supreme Court from 1957 to 1961. It must have been this who trained him in the disciplined legal analysis that characterize Justice Reyes's unrivalled work in the civil law tradition. He then proceeded to practice law and organize his own firm, becoming a board member or chair of various corporations, and handling law at various Manila law schools. He later sat in the UP Law Center's Civil Code Revision Committee, which can trace its roots to Jesus Jorge Bocobo, another of the premier Civil Code of the Philippines and who made sure that our laws embrace the eternal principles of natural justice (and, here has it, when he became UP president, he also taught at the Ateneo). He fulfilled his pride by modestly declined by eligible).

In 1993, President Fidel V. Ramos appointed Jose C. Vitug to the Supreme Court, which has since recognized his expertise and assigned him to write its toughest Civil Law decisions. Chairing Vitug wrote the framework on one such landmark's landmark "Conflict of Laws," that interest-field of law dealing with "cases with a foreign element" wherein Philippine and foreign laws simultaneously apply).

Justice Vitug's colleagues in the Court, recognizing that deep in his heart he has never ceased to be a law professor, asked him to chair the Supreme Court Committee on Legal Education and Bar Matters. I am blessed to be a member of the Vitug Committee, and I have seen up-close his passion for reforming the bar examinations, and how deeply he feels about the subject of taxation and the teaching of Legal Ethics. Regarding the bar exams, one easily feels his concern to help the struggling law student earn his stripes, while always retaining that only the fit are admitted into the practice of law. During weekend visits, but for the past three years, I have seen how, reasonably but gently, he guided the senior justices on that Committee to consensus after intense intellectual jousting.

Justice Vitug is known by friends to be a very private man—simply, as that others may simply live." Contrast with the overexposed ego of family and old friendships, he once said, at the unveiling of his portrait in his hometown in Visayas, Philippines, that it was "a humbling experience." relieving I am sure to the reverse, to rather than the portrait.

Late-night hours for dimmed Supreme Court decisions. It only they had the rare opportunity to work with Justice Vitug, they would appreciate his generous even more. Only then will they feel his humanity come through despite the stiff and formal logic of law.

Justice Vitug in his generous has often lamented the emotional distance required by a judge's calling. Benjamin Cardozo, one of the best writers ever to sit in the US Supreme Court, wrote that the purpose of the Bill of Rights is to withdraw certain subjects from the vicissitudes of political controversy, to place them beyond the reach of majorities... and to establish them as legal principles to be applied by the courts."

Justice Vitug lived up to that challenge in heavenly Reyes's formula, rejecting the governments plea for TV and radio coverage for the flying plunder case. The prosecution cited the media right to free speech and the public's right to know. Justice Vitug rejected the petition: TV exposure that triggered the outrage that led Estrada. It is triumph in the streets, would now help them triumph in the courts. But against these claims, Justice Vitug balanced the right of the accused, however unpopular it is has trial.

"It is however all to easily overlooked," wrote that an accused receives a verdict solely on the basis of a just and dispassionate judgment, a verdict that would come only after the presentation of credible evidence established only under sanctioned witnesses unswayed by any kind of pressure, whether upon or visible, in proceedings carried out devoid of hysterics that might detract from its basic aim to favor verdicts decisive from improper influence, and deservedly a judge with an unprejudiced mind, unbridled by cunning emotion or passion."

He called for fair, calm and deliberate disposition of justice, but the "hooting throng... arrogate unto themselves the task of judging the guilt of the accused" and lose judges "pander to the desire for publicity [by] a few grandstanding lawyers."

Justice Vitug had neither confirmed the conviction of Estrada nor acquitted him. Based with People Power. "Should [the Court] choose a literal and narrow view of the Constitution, invoke the rule of strict law and exercise its exclusive, yet reluctant, duty to prejudice for [the Court itself] to take a hand? ... Paradoxically, the first impression would be that it unduly impeded the Constitution, the second could result."

Justice Vitug has placed his finger precisely on the judge's quandary: his must distance himself from the "hooting throng" but, at the same time intervene his "characteristic restraint" and engage himself in the life of his people. "The so-called seclusion... is an abstract... by the nature of the office," he says and open-eyed to injustice's hideous. "We are every one of us flawed, but it is the quiet of a secret corner, as we all know."

Basis of accountability

ANALYSIS

Armando Doronila

The aspect of job creation and funding of small entrepreneurs has a clear social objective. They are a pitch to alleviate poverty and develop a wider middle-class base, both of which have important political implications, including easing the growth of urban unrest, a source of instability most acute in the post-martial law years.

While the programs have clear targets, they will put in the test the President's political will. She will be judged on the basis of the threatened portions of her speech.

She said, "I will challenge myself and our government to live up to the highest standards of honesty and competence in the public service." She better delivers on this pledge, otherwise her electoral mandate and legitimacy will soon be eroded.

Her firmness and determination will be tested on the pledge to track down on tax evasion even after the deadline expires to close the revenue gap and the deficit and finance many of her programs. She said, "The government must make tough choices, but that I promise here will be tougher on those who have more than those who have it already tough."

The love and tempo of the administration were captured by the Bert Dominic group of composers "Now We Can't Go," composed by Dennis Tenjueco and produced by Bob Ong Santos and sung by a choir at the Luneta inauguration. According to the composers, the theme was developed from the desire of the country "to go on with the business of nation building," following the bloody conduct of the May elections.

Whether the celebrational beats in the electronic sound catch on and join the tempo of the theme song in response to the President's call for national unity remains a big question. The President appealed, "to achieve a united country, we need to have the loyal dissidence of our country equal to not only the need but also the solution. That solution must engage all segments of society in a new government of political reform and economic change. Our nation must embrace a vision of economic opportunity amid cohesion and always welcome democratic dissent."

She added that "our ability to unify will be judged by our ability to come together under a common vision that will be judged by what will create the division that build in hard as a nation."

Rattled by a broad mandate that allowed the administration to capture large majorities in Congress, the President's primary fear of complacence is the belief that numerical superiority would facilitate the passage of key measures on her legislative agenda. With the opposition badly battered in the elections and its identity, the administration has to reassert the basis of its winning electoral coalition (E.U.). It has to be secure on the basis of programs.

With its loss, the opposition has been left groping for a new basis of its own unity. It cannot act as an effective opposition if what ghosts together is a grievance or resentment that is manufactured in the election. The administration must be elected in the terms of programs. The opposition should create a house from this and rebuild itself on the foundations of a new coalition welded together by an alternative program.

The programs spelled out by the inaugural address bear the outline of a new program-based coalition that should be the cluster of its dimension in the next six years. This programmatic base should keep the new administration from being pulled apart by narrow demands for political rewards from groups that worked for an administration victory during the campaign.

The objective was to fit the pieces in the jigsaw in the composition of the new Cabinet, which will tell what sectors or interest groups are being given advantages and concessions.

'Tiangge' of the future

A FEW weeks back, I wrote about the pleasures of going to the Sidcor Sunday market on Edsa. What was so attractive about the market was that it was a venue for small- and medium-scale entrepreneurs to sell farm produce and other local products from all over the countries. I can tell you that each Sunday that I went there, I discovered new products.

Besides the food, there was a whole section for plants, again with an amazing variety, from towering bamboos to tiny bonsai, from common kinds to strange orchids to the Mickey Mouse plant (actually a relative of the eggplant). There were dry goods, mainly clothing but also a good selection of handicrafts, from exquisite tables and chairs from Taiwan to wrap-around native dresses from Thailand.

PINOY KASI

Michael L. Tan

Over the last few months, the market, which was open only on Sunday mornings, had come to attract larger crowds, without the place becoming congested.

Alas, it was all too good to be true. Last Sunday was their last market day; the owners of the lot having decided to claim the land to Sidcor.

Before you despair, let me tell you the Sidcor people and the vendors will be opening up new sites, the addresses of which I will give shortly, but I thought I should explain why there was so much sadness over the closure of the Edsa site.

The Sidcor Edsa market represented an encouraging new development in the development of the Filipino economy. A kind of venture in its original intent, if you look at it with hindsight, it was the beginning of a specialty tiangge, which went really classier of street stalls or tabletops. Humble as they may have looked, those tiangge activities supported countless families. Early Chinese migrants certainly depended on these tiangge activities, the term itself being derived from Minnan or Hokkien Chinese, and I wouldn't be surprised if some of our Divisoria tycoons can trace back the source of their wealth to a tiangge stall.

In the last decade or so, the rise of malls has reconfigured the tiangge. Mall owners realized income could be derived not just from the larger store spaces but from the empty spaces as well. We've seen how every inch of mall space has been exploited, really packed to the last square meter to the point of causing safety hazards. And where early tiangge activities were in the open spaces, mall owners have increasingly commercialized these spaces. The rise of vending these tiny tiangge spaces have skyrocketed, reaching five-digit amounts affordable only to the upper middle class.

The Sidcor market was an encouraging development, a return to the original concept of the tiangge as space for small-, mid- and small-scale entrepreneurs, a way of stimulating local economies.

Of course, Sidcor was also a microcosm of what was going on nationwide. For example, Bong, my supplier of mangoes from Nueva Ecija, said her supply was seasonal and erratic, and as to make ends meet, she also had to sell fruits from China. I saw those same stalls sold at all fruits South America shipped to by relatives; she dealt with all to-kilogram boxes complete with the names of the vendors and recipients.

Those traditional tiangge activities, I noted, definitely, there's a place for imported goods to these tiangge, as long as local products were given a fighting chance as well. What was important was that the Sidcor tiangge were expanding the range of choices for an emerging group of consumers like myself, interested in ecologically friendly agriculture as well as promoting local food products.

Before Sidcor, I used to despair looking for good vegetables. Your ingredient was shooting from the products being sold. My favorite stall was one managed by Bernie Garcia from Baguio, where I could get fresh alfalfa sprouts, arugula (rabanos), mushrooms—stuff that I tried growing myself but failed miserably. What was always so exciting was you never knew what Bernie's stall would have. If I arrived a bit late, meaning after 10 a.m., I would find that the arugula, lettuce and mushrooms, first to her though, because he'd always have something new. Last week it was organic celery, seriously, still in the pods. (Just make wonderful appetizers, snacks and vegetarian pulutan) to go with beer or soju.

My hamstarter for the impact of places like Sidcor has been my partner Joyce, who is as keen as Filipinos scientists go, on the benefits of eating fresh and organic and seasonal foods from the supermarket. A few trips to Sidcor and now he's hooked: so late, seasonal, native chicken eggs, mangoes from Guimaras, upland rice, oh, and he's not forgot the proletarian tanggi (young bean sprouts), which he didn't know could be so tasty and versatile.

Tianggo like that of Sidcor's have created spaces for a civilized introduction of new, helping to change people's tastes, and lifestyles (those who missed the tiangge simply only on Sunday mornings, which means if you want to catch them, you'll have to cut down on those late Saturday nights out).

Sidcor reminded me of where the organic foods industry was in the United States about 20 years ago. I was a student there, and had lived in a duplex house, the other half owned by a couple who were running a small organic food store. The store ate sold for, "happier" as far as Texans were concerned, but we were on way picking out and weighing what we needed, and exchanging pleasantries with the owners about politics and commenting about the stuff they sold, or didn't sell, mostly like I do with the Sidcor vendors.

There does, whenever I visit the States, I'm shocked to find new supermarkets, even whole malls, specializing in these kinds of products, with Filipinos at the fresh-food counters. I have missed feelings, happy as one hand in see organic foods entering the mainstream, but also worried that small stores might disappear.

In the 1970s, there was a slogan popular with people trying to develop alternative lifestyles: "Small is good." It wasn't just an idealistic vision to certain philosophy, it was a recognition that there is and many unique advantages in size became driving economies because they had a strong foundation of small- and medium-scale enterprises.

Sidcor and other alternative tiangge are a step in that direction of development with variety and hope's the good news, although the Edsa site closed down last Sunday, they're reconvening thereafter starting this Sunday on Market! Dec. Blas in the Camp Crame/Quezon Circle/Quezon City. Other vendors say they will move to the Bay Ramp lot on Ortigas, near MC Depot. Still others say they will join the organic food market on Commercial Street in Greenhills. I intend to visit all these sites and write about them, hoping more readers will drop in as well and indulge in the pleasures of a real tiangge.

Recycling or continuity?

AT LARGE

Rina Jimenez-David

THE REPORTER of ABC-5 wearing the president's campaign color of blue (Cebu Governor Lito Osmeña might in fact repeat on the President's "Ten-Point Agenda" for his new term. Wearing a recycled gown, she said, President Gloria Macapagal-Arroyo unveiled a "recycled" program of governance that would include from her previous declarations and promises.

Well, I quipped to newscaster Arlyn Dela Cruz, the point does have been recycled, but at least it was still an Inno Sotto! Likewise, perhaps we should view the term not as a change that Gloria Macapagal-Arroyo unveiled a "recycled" program of governance that would include from her previous declarations and promises.

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Well, I quipped to newscaster Arlyn Dela Cruz, the point does have been recycled, but at least it was still an Inno Sotto! Likewise, perhaps we should view the term not as so much "recycled" as a sign of continuity in policies and programs, something that's been woefully lacking in our political climate past few years.

The need for consistency and consistency has been a particular failing of governance in the Philippines. The minute a new official assumes office, out comes the thing that the previous administration has done or planned—the good along with the bad and the not-so-good. Oftentimes, along with these policies and programs are jettisoned everyone else who came in contact of the previous occupant. In fact, anyone the next office holder encounters in almost the agency to eliminate, with hundreds of employees losing their jobs every time a new broom is used with a newer manner. This, even as Civil Service rules seek to protect the bureaucracy from the depredations of politicians.

It is noteworthy, then, in the swearing-in ceremony for Civil Service Chair Karina Constantino-David against newly elected officials demanding "simultaneous resignations" from their subordinates, saying these should not be construed as the employees' time intent to abandon their jobs.)

WHAT the next six years promise, then, is consistency—a chance to pursue policies and programs that have good long-term prospects for success but have usually managed to achieve their goals because they haven't been allowed to be tested through time.

By the end of her term, the President would have had some years to implement all of those good things she made in the Iloilo Ilonggo and reiterated in Luneta. More than enough time to prove her sincerity as to fall by the **bankruptcy of her ideas. Either way she will be left with no excuses.** Some may see the familiar, sounding agenda as a mere recycling of ideas, if not a stale admission of failure during the last three years. But I prefer to view it as a sign of a consistency that, eventually, may mean the time it gives the chair of the past three years, capped by the contentious campaign and elections, the drama-out canvassing and the protests and disputed that promises to descend at last the next few months in front, a little stability would end to a bad thing for this country.

* * *

A GOOMOOSE of these numbers, though, is the impression of utter incoherence everywhere you look.

Featuring the conviction that everything that transpired before has been validated by victory at the polls.

I think Ms Arroyo, being the sharp politician that she is, knows her margin of victory is too narrow to give her any real comfort or excuse for complacency. And one way she can take to give real meaning to this mandate that she has gained is to undertake a sincere, thorough and workable reform of her own administration and the governing system that she presides over. Because it is what needs to be revised or rejected outright, what should be pursued, if not strengthened and renewed, what concerns, if any, her administration had neglected or ignored.

Such an undertaking, if the President found it odd that much of the "new" 10-point agenda dealt with the delivery of basic services like employment, education, power and water, and basic protection by developed countries, most evident government services like these almost as a matter of course, since delivering the basic necessities of life is the work they "are" the government for in the first place, leaves much room for skepticism about such a promised agenda is like listening to an endless sequence for a time by promising she will do her job.

Of course, basic services like water, roads and schooling are not what the great mass of Filipinos really care about and about the only thing they expect from the government. Perhaps what this administration is the utter failure of governance, such that officials do not see the delivery of basic services as what it has been duty to the people who are paying their salaries, but rather as a favor granted, on which they deign to spend their time and energy.

* * *

ONGOING at Mahidol University in Thailand is the Asia Pacific NGO Forum on Beijing + 10, which aims to review how governments in the region have lived up to the commitments they signed at the Beijing Platform for Action a decade ago and what women's groups and other non-government organizations can do not just to secure the gains won in Beijing, but also to get governments to address lately emerging gender issues.

Chairing the conference group is Patricia B. Licuanan, president of Miriam College, who chaired the drafting committee at both the Asia Pacific regional level and the international meet in Beijing in 1995. Expected to result from the conference is a report on the achievement of the progress made in the implementation of the Beijing Platform for Action and pointing the way toward the future, non-strategies for achieving for women's development in the 2000s and post-2000s, and a booklet on "innovative, successful or promising projects in the region that showcase women's contributions to the implementation of the Beijing Platform."

We should know after the Bangkok conference whether the past 10 years have really made life better for women, but especially poor women, in Asia and the Pacific, or if the gains they have won in fact have been matched by stagnation, if not erosion, of women's gains.

The burden of succession

LOOKING BACK

Ambeth R. Ocampo

LAMONT WILL inauguration ceremonies, first at the Quirino Grandstand and later at the Cebu Capitol, all eyes were on Guillo on the President.

The Vice President was also noticed, the attention probably brought about by media from whom radio host de Cuerpo quoted. A number of commentators said on television one of these days now Vice President Noli would be the "spare tire" to "bring a heartbeat away from the presidency." President Macapagal-Arroyo was vice president when People Power 1 drove Joseph Estrada from Malacañang, so she can give the new Vice President mixed advice on how to handle any eventuality.

One history presents two other victims of late Carlos Garcia was vice president and took over when Ramon Magsaysay died in a plane crash in March 1957. Earlier, there was Elpidio Quirino who became president when Manuel Roxas expired from a heart attack. Now there is a friendly being a heartbeat away from the presidency.

Being vice president is a tricky situation, for one would not, nor ever as a thought, wish the president ill just to get to Malacañang. Only "Kabuyan" can tell us what it's all about, and we will not be surprised if he tells more during the next six years than they can refer to while editing their memoirs in the future.

Browsing through the "Memoirs" of Quirino recently, I tried to find out just an explanation of his public record but most of his reflections on the Philippine presidency hinge, What is it like to be temporarily first interpreter?

Aboard the Coast Guard patrol boat on its way back to Manila in the morning of April 18, 1948, I received word of the sudden death of President Manuel Roxas. He had succumbed to a heart attack in the afternoon at Clark Field (Angeles, Pampanga). I was returning from an inspection trip to the Visayas.

"I could not altogether shake off from my mind the prospect that succession to me to Roxas after had been spoken of in terms comparable to the abuse heaped on Washington himself in his time, and that could scarcely be applied to him, a statesman of ability, or even a common prejudice," Quirino recalled. "When Lincoln fell before the senseless bullet of his one party were reported to have rejoiced and looked upon the event as a 'god-send to the country.' The critics of Thomas Jefferson 'agreed that he was a man of illusions, highly dangerous to society and unfit to hold the place of trust.'"

Now, I did not see myself in the same category as Lincoln or why I should deserve better considerations. It was enough, and I felt heartened, that my former partner had stood such doublings with unflagging purpose and consistency.

Yesterday early, my colleagues in the Liberal Party may have realized that their assumption in delay in 1946 in statement of home was to make ratification of supposed political motion shaped by geographic consideration. Born came from the Visayas, as his running mate stood come from Luzon, and from that area of it about seven could live. Quirino's explanation as why I should deserve better considerations. It was enough, and I felt heartened, that my former partner had stood such doublings with unflagging purpose and consistency.

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Let's not fly tattered RP flags

I WAS in Rome on a pilgrimage led by Msgr. Jose Clemente, dean of Philippine Catholics in the Diaspora, Lateran Oblate diocese. After attending the thanksgiving papal audience at the Vatican, along with tens of thousands of people coming from all parts of the world, our group of Filipinos repaired for self-refreshment to the nearby St. Lorenzo, a restaurant, within a stone's throw away from St. Peter's Square. There, we were confronted with a sight that almost broke our hearts. To our dismay and grief, we saw the official symbol of our republic, the Philippine flag, faded and near-tattered, its red, white and blue and yellow colors indistinguishable. The star of eyes and the world announcing the Philippine office in the Holy See, I think, the words "Ba mgmat ng Pilipinas?") alongside the flag were themselves faded and hardly readable.

Although pressed for time, I took it upon myself to go up to the Philippine office. There were three people in the office, but I was told they did not have a consul there. I was introduced to the acting administrative officer, a certain Ms Vera, and I led all three to the window with the flag (where it), showing her the consternation Filipino-Americans in my group on the ground. Vera admitted that the office was aware of the condition of the flag. I felt her icy calling card and asked her explosion send me an e-mail and tell me how we can help in getting that official worn-flag staff-mast of arms.

I have not heard from her and true lovers to the heavenly might spend up things by bringing the office of help to the attention of the proper authority. I am curious to my office to arrange a new flag for the Philippine office in the Vatican. (In the "hierarchical" spirit, which lives in the hearts of overseas Filipinos, we want to help, already have collected pledges from several associated people in Houston, Texas. The "Wow, Philippines!" tourism campaign did not prime time in Rome when our staunch, inviting people in the Philippines. Thousands and thousands of people pass through that area near St. Peter's Square every day. Please, let us refurbish our window in the world in Rome, let us honor our Philippine flag and the Philippines.

—RUDY GAN ROMAN,
LLB[illegible] Iberia Center,
Houston, Texas 77009-USA

Mercado's dreams

EDSA: June 17 editorial opened with "Discourse is never kill all the lawyers, as Shakespeare so eagerly advised..."

The allusion was to the bard's line in "Henry VI, Part II," Act IV Scene II: "The first thing we do, let's kill all the lawyers."

The speaker was Dick the Butcher, a know-nothing drag in the gang of Jack Cade, who thought that if anybody wanted to take over, he should get rid of the Talibans, Dickens, Sobrepas and Arroyos, which anyone failed to do.

Where you think of them, the thought that should come to mind is, "the first thing we do, let's kill all these lawyers." Shakespeare used irony.

The butcher's, Atty's, Mercado, cutline in the words (PDI, 6/15/04), included me from the months since, but I had fought for his right to kick me in the arse. He said no one repeats my opinions more hurting agreed to defend President Erap after his ouster. In fact, Cade's dreams, maybe, and that of the elite. Either the females have the distinction of having three of them get elected to the Senate, the message that cheap-theft entertainment starts cars or divide us should not be lost on anyone.

And I will continue to speak and write even as I ask that if there is anybody any closer I have managed not to offend yet, just please raise your right hand. Meantime, let's all compose in the intervals of ideas, above ideas last of today pieces current in our long run.

—R.I.Y.S.G.(PTAG),
4262 Bigwas St.,
Palanan, Makati City

Is the gov't aware of the 'Singapore Yukis'?

A COUPLE of months ago in a leading newspaper here in Singapore, I read a report about a group of young Filipino women arrested, handcuffed in jears and lined up outside a pub. They were arrested for allegedly working illegally as guest relations officers and hostesses. According to the report, some of these were caught red-handed (inside the pub) engaging in sexual acts with their customers.

I wonder if the Philippine government is aware that there are literally hundreds of young Filipino women, some as young as 18 years old, who come to Singapore as entertainers but then work without valid permits in pubs, bars and red houses. We just by the end direction and you can see them in their sexy outfits outside pubs, waiting for potential customers. There, they are also called "Singapore Yukis."

—RAMILI DELA CRUZ-
danlie_dlc@yahoo.com

Post-election protests

CATHOLIC bishops or any other religious organization in the Philippines should not indulge in or interfere with politics. That is true statement in the United States. There must be a separation between the state and the church. But in the Philippines, there seems to be no distinction between the two. This is Catholic, but the religious establishment in your country is abusing the substance of your country's government.—**Frank Albert, 22210Bonnell Circle, San Pablo, CA 94806**

* * *

I just wonder how stupid, useless and mindless my countrymen are. We have a newly installed president and yet on day one chaos seems will bring her down. It's absurd and a disgrace to myself and to other peaceful and hardworking people. I always say to friends that wherever wins in this or any election, from that one person and rallies will begin. Filipinos will never change their mob mentality. We will not go forward or be like Singapore. That's why I have stay ing here.—**Norman Bonifacio, San Gl. como, San Pedro, Laguna, (to e-mail)**

* * *

If only Filipino were more objective and politically mature, things would be different. Our mind-set is focused on corruption as the sore changed of values and the roads is has never changed whoever hosts was elected. I can't blame them, because if they won they would have been the cheaters. Even most of the media people what have a hand in molding the people's opinion cannot even do what they are supposed to do and report the events without personal bias.—**Eileen Tan, 9/3 Isbell Avenue, South Australia**

VOICES ON INQ7.NET

* * *

The most significant cause for the opposition's failure happened in the beginning when she deposed president Joseph Estrada, gave his "blessing" to Gloria's (the JC) candidacy. Edsa People Power II was still fresh in the minds of the people, and voting for the last minute how minutes and ballots inventions may let's was just like voting friends back to power. Most of us here in our communities do not want anything more from Estrada. In fact, we are saddened to how the case against him is delayed by many legal technicalities one debate is choosing. We hope the noisy minority will shut up once and for all, so we can go on with our lives and work for the improvement of our country.—**Ruffin de Lima, Loreto Street, Santa Mangaga, Silay City, Negros Occidental, (to e-mail)**

* * *

In line with President Macapagal-Arroyo's repeated calls for removing 1 cent fringe but to get change moved on the right foot by showing the public the budget for her inauguration. A detailed list of what the Filipino spent for her such ruling should be printed in all major dailies for everyone to see. It's our hard-earned money we should at least be told where and how it's being spent.—**Sherwin Reyes, Cleyland Pioneer, Mandaluyong, (to e-mail**

If you have any complaints, grievances or suggestions about the treatment of news (subjects in the Inquirer, you may write to the Readers' Advocate, Philippine Daily Inquirer, Chino Roces Avenue, corner Pasay and Blumentritt Streets, City of Makati or send a fax to 896-807-4753, 807-4754, or e-mail readersadvocate@inquirer.com.ph.

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Across the NATION
Assistant Editor Tony Bergonia

7,000 votes decide Cebu race for gov

By Jaime R. Balaoing
and Jhonnes Napalacan
PDI Visayas Bureau

CEBU CITY—Almost six hours after newly elected local officials in the country have assumed office on Wednesday, the Cebu Provincial Board of Canvassers finally proclaimed the winning governor, vice governor and board members of the province.

Gwendolyne Garcia, daughter of outgoing three-term governor Pablo Garcia, was proclaimed the newly elected governor of Cebu despite a move of gubernatorial aspirant Tomas Osmeña Jr. to further delay the canvassing.

The lock-step past 7 p.m. before Vice Presidente Noli de Castro at the Capitol Social Hall.

The 48-year-old former capitol consultant made history by becoming the first woman to sit at the helm of the provincial government.

Final tally showed that Garcia won by a margin of 7,329 votes with 406,202 votes as against Mariano's 398,873 votes.

But Mariano's running mate, Congressman Antonio Cuenco's running mate, Julian Daan said was premature since the provincial election supervisor Gil Lobrigo proclaimed the winners at exactly 5:00 p.m. of June 30. The canvassing was suspended on May 16 because of the pre-proclamation protests.

Cited in a Filipinana dress, Garcia was flanked by her family relatives, municipal mayors during her proclamation. Security personnel were also escorting the newly proclaimed governor after the chair of the board of canvassers received several death threats.

More than a hundred supporters of Garcia greeted her outside the Provincial Education Department building, where the reconvening of the PBOC took place since the Capitol was being used for the presidential inauguration on Wednesday.

The PBOC also proclaimed the winning board members, namely, Isaias Almirante and Gustavo Gotiong for the second district, Imelda Staples and Victoria Cominista for the third district, Jesus Mendigo and Jose Maria Castanedo for the fourth district, and Gabriel Luis Quisumbing and Victor Maambong for the sixth district.

VANTAGE POINT
Photographers jostle for position atop a building to get a closer view of inauguration rites for President Macapagal-Arroyo on Wednesday.

2 crime suspects slain after mayor's tough talk

BAÑAO CITY—Barely 11 hours after Mayor Santiago Dumo'ot delivered his inaugural speech, where he declared that criminals have no place in the city, unidentified gunmen have killed at least two crime suspects on Wednesday.

The first victim is full name a 22 year-old man in Sonnagay Mun.

Rodel Sandagan was inside his house in San Julian Village, with his pregnant wife and his young child, when a lone gunman barged around 6 p.m. and shot him three in the head.

Sandagan, a tattoo artist, was previously accused for cell phone snatching.

The suspect casually fled on board a waiting getaway motorcycle driven by another man.

Police investigators supposed three spent shells of .45 cal. pistol near Sandagan's body.

At midnight, 31-year old hotel worker Roberto Gesaro was selling hotel when two motorcycle riding gunmen shot him after a brief chase, also in Barangay Mas.

With the killings, the death toll in the vigilante-style execution this year reached 11.

Last year, 90 people, including several minors, were slain by motorcycle-riding suspects. Anthony Afinida *with a report from Jeffrey Tupas, PDI Mindanao Bureau*

Taxpayers face burden of unused aid for Abubakar

COTABATO CITY—Local taxpayers face the irony of inheriting a multimillion-dollar foreign aid for Camp Abubakar, the fallen rebel stronghold, now the nucleus of the government's social development programs in Central Mindanao.

Augusto Mendoza, project manager of the Asian Development Bank-Japanese Bokyo Community Project (ADB-MECP), said the ADB funds has asked late-elected local government units of the Autonomous Region in Muslim Mindanao (ARMM) were supposed to be "repaid, provided that the projects are completed" by the "LGUs as development partners."

But the 154 million-component infrastructure projects of the ADB-MECP in Buldon and Barira, Maguindanao, remain there four years consistent Camp Abubakar, have not been completed, according to the Department of Agrarian Reform in the ARMM.

On June 26, the DAR-ARMM distributed 154 original certificates of title (OCTs) to 320 Muslim and Christian farming families in Buldon, and during which ARMM Gov. Datuk Hamid added the support agencies to offer additional aspects of livelihood to the implementation of P60 million in foreign aid.

Mendoza said the ADB-MECP required 1,611 beneficiaries to present unemployed land and the completion of the project as precondition for the aid grant. The ADB-MECP has funded some P60 million in projects in Barira, Buldon and Matanog.

Otherwise, Mendoza said, the LGUs would have to repay the grant as if it were a loan, as provided in the memoranda of agreement signed by local officials of each of these beneficiary towns and ADB-MECP representatives.

After the camp's fall in mid-year of 2000, ADB had pressed on grant for agrarian reform community projects, not only in Maguindanao but in the four other provinces of the ARMM.

The beneficiary areas including Abubakar, then a rebel stronghold, were identified as early as 1996 by agrarian reform communities by representatives of the two parties in the agreement and other government agencies.

Buldon, Rahid Ebding, Maguindanao Agrarian reform community officer, said the Department of Environment and Natural Resources in the ARMM, dug old land titles pointing to early Christian settlers in the area "even if it was years of land disputes" with Camp Abubakar rebels. Ali Macabalang

Kin restive over delay in return of OFW's body

By Russell Kraker
PDI Central Luzon Desk

TARLAC CITY—After more than a week of waiting for the return of his body, the family of an overseas contract worker who died last June 10 after falling from a 40-meter high catwalk in a construction site in Riyadh, Saudi Arabia, is turning restive.

Donald Cunin, 27, was working as a safety officer when he died of wood connecting two building structures where the unfortunate guy was, sending him crashing to the ground.

Family members said Donald's 48-year-old mother, Elvira, is anxious to see her son's body. She also never stops calling friends in Saudi Arabia, demanding to know why Donald's remains is not yet home, they said.

Cunin, Donald's 29-year-old brother, said family friends in Saudi Arabia even advised them to seek the help of the media to compel the Department of Foreign Affairs to speed up the processing of paperwork for the dead father's immediate return.

Pacified

He said his mother was pacified only before being told that the body "might arrive" on Sunday (July 4).

He said his family was told that a two-week delay in the return of a dead Filipino's body from Saudi Arabia was "relative. It's quick."

He said his mother was taking comfort in the case of another dead Filipino in Saudi Arabia who reportedly could not be returned home because his family has yet to raise a million pesos to pay for the rituals' assistantship killed by the Filipino.

The Filipino was driving a car when he hit a camel, killing it. The camel's owner body some crashing down, pinning the Filipino to death.

Reports said the camel was "supposedly insured" thus the demand for payment from the dead Filipino's family.

Cause of delay

Last June 26, another brother, 23-year-old Darnell, and a family friend, went to the DFA to follow up Donald's case. There they were told that an investigation by the Saudi Arabian government of Donald's death was causing the delay in the return of his body.

Donald left Tarlac in April for one to join friends who were already working in Saudi Arabia as the time. He was planning to return in December this year, according to his family.

Igorot youths abroad rediscover culture, bridge gaps

By Desiree Cobaco
PDI Northern Luzon Bureau

BAGUIO CITY—Igorot youths who grew up abroad have rediscovered their culture and are now prouder than their counterparts in the Philippines of their heritage, an official of the Igorot Global Organization (IGO) said.

Dancer and more the youth groups abroad are aware of their culture and heritage and this one is bridging the gap between generations, Dulnuan said, the youths abroad are prouder than their counterparts here in the Philippines," said Imelda Dacoy, IGO secretary.

Dacoy credited this "cultural reawakening" to the success of the first Igorot International Convention (IIC) held in Los Angeles, California, in 1995, where Igorot youths were asked to participate.

She said after the consultation, many of these young Igorots living in the United States and Australia formed various organizations now and started conducting cultural activities in their communities.

She said the IGO organized the 1995 consultation especially for the youth "so they could understand their grandparents who were living with them."

Dacoy said these young Igorots are taking the value of for to learn more about their history and participate in cultural activities such as dancing and chanting as practiced by their ancestors from the mainland.

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Logging blamed for floods was allowed by DENR, other execs

COMPOSTELA CITY—The alleged logging activities of the landed Alcantara clan, which is being blamed for Monday's flash floods in at least two North Cotabato towns, was reversed by previous this data back to the administration of ousted President.

On the basis of these documents, the Department of Environment and Natural Resources in the Autonomous Region in Muslim Mindanao (ARMM) on Sept. 6, 1999 issued a private land timber license permit (PLTP) to the clan led by late Datu Unsad Alcantara. DENR Maguindanao district office Kabul Kalbang said.

Kalbang said prior to the issuance of the PLTP, the ARMM-DENR had revoked chainsaw from former Alcantara town Mayor Patricio Sebero, indicating that the area did not fall under the jurisdiction of North Cotabato, but Maguindanao.

He said Sebero's revalidation claimed that the area was part of a "reservation area under Presidential Proclamation 783, dated March 16, 1953," issued by the late president Ramon Magsaysay.

Then Buldon town Mayor Abakin Mandilan and Magpale datuu Ino Taneeta Candao endorsed Alcantara's tree-cutting permit application with the DENR-ARMM.

"The permit issued by the DENR-ARMM expired on Oct. 20, 2000, and the region has since not issued new permits," Kalbang said.

Earlier, North Cotabato Governor Emmanuel Pifiol blamed Datu Unsad for the flood that claimed at least six lives in Alamada on Monday.

Pifiol said Unsad conducted his activities despite a court order that stemmed from a boundary dispute North Cotabato has with Maguindanao and Lanao del Sur.

In the aftermath of the flash floods, Pifiol also criticized the Maguindanao DENR for allowing Datu Unsad to cut trees.

"It is only the regional government, not the provincial or district offices of the DENR, which is allowed to issue permit for logging operations within the region," Bulong said.

Kalbang said under the Ingudan administration, former agrarian reform secretary Ernesto Garilao awarded certificates of land owner-ship to Alamada and his people for their homestead domain claim on 3,271 hectares, a small part of what had been declared under Maguindanao as alienable and disposable land.

He said what the PLTP was issued is 1991. Alamada was allowed "to clear the area of trees as it could be converted into agricultural land. But it's breaking trees, orchard and forest ecosystem," Wadi Mendoza, PDI Mindanao Bureau

Tawi-tawi execs urged not to negotiate with Abu Sayyaf on hostages

ZAMBOANGA CITY—Military and police officials in Tawi-tawi urged local officials to refrain from negotiating with the Abu Sayyaf group for the release of the three kidnapping Foreign hostages the bandit group has been holding on the island.

Capt. Felicisimo Angeles, chief of the Navy's Task Force 62, said negotiations involving money would be counterproductive to the ongoing efforts to free hostages Ediborah Ann Walter Orr and Michaelanne Yeh Chee Yeung and Wong Mun Nieng.

Tawi-tawi Gov. Sadikul Sahali had earlier admitted that he and the kidnappers' emissary-negotiators talk.

Sahali said the Abu Sayyaf faction holding the victims has been demanding P10 million in ransom.

The victims were snatched aboard a tugboat in April while on their way to Cebu to deliver coal to a cement firm.

"Truth is[sic] will not help solve the problem," Angeles said.

Supt. William Uriman, Tawi-tawi police director, said the police appreciate civilian efforts to secure the release of the hostages but negotiators should strictly follow the no-negotiation, no-ransom policy of the government.

Sahali said if the kidnappers insist on making cash out of the hostages, he would have no other choice "but to sacrifice the lives of the hostages and let the military conduct full-scale operations."

The Abu Sayyaf is a small band of Muslim extremists blamed for a dozen or so kidnappings and executions of some of its hostages, including foreigners.

Among the high profile executions condemned by the group involved American Guillermo Sobero, who was beheaded on Independence Day 2001. Jaffar J. Alipala, PIA Mindanao Bureau

ELDOHI
The success of the inauguration of President Arroyo in Cebu City Wednesday was partly due to the efforts of workers like this woman fixing flowers that decorated the inauguration site.

Disaster looms large over air controller-less Clark

By Tonette Orejas
PDI Central Luzon Desk

CLARK SPECIAL ECONOMIC ZONE—The one certified air traffic controller guided planes approaching the riddled Diosdado Macapagal International Airport (DMIA) here on Wednesday night, passing safety cues to the floor of the giant cargo forwarders UPS and Federal Express and flag carriers, including the Philippine Air Lines.

A non-rated personnel, who was assigned on the aerodrome tower, handled the approach control service (APP), an important counter in the Transportation Office (DOTC) said.

The source said those at the aerodrome are limited to handling the take-off and landing of planes but are not supposed to assist planes approaching the DMIA.

"The seven air traffic controllers are away. What are left are trainees. I'm afraid for tonight's events. Starting midnight, aircraft will swarm Clark, the radar, no engaves. It's going to be risky for planes," the source said.

National interest

He disclosure, he said, was prompted by "national interest." A cargo plane, he said, can be worth $25 billion, and any damage to it while at the cross-wind airport is on the lake of the Philippine government.

Cargo and passenger flights, he warned, could be diverted out of Clark to avoid an air disaster.

According to the source, the APP was "abandoned" after two of the seven licensed controllers were ousted. Four more are leave while the seventh left after 48 hours of straight duty without sleep.

With the last man left standing at, ready out due to physical strain, the control is "now a twilight zone," the source said. ATO employees, he said, "pressured" for the ouster of the seven controllers, one of whom was a supervisor, over bickering on who should go to help for the DMIA's radar control training.

The radar was brought to loan from the German bank Deutsche. It was the most recent in the litany of efforts undertaken by the Clark Development Corp. (CDC) and the Clark International Airport Corp. to boost the development of the airport.

Gateway

An executive order in 1997 declared it as the country's premier international gateway.

A former United States military airport, the DMIA has two parallel 12,000-meter runways capable of handling wide-bodied aircraft.

The CDC recently finished the upgrade of the apron and runways at a cost of P320 million.

CDC president Emmanuel Angeles and other top officials of both Subic conversion agencies said they would not allow ATO's problems to get in the way of the DMIA's progress.

"The rank inevitably has some out of their skin," the source said of the ATO non-rating that stemmed from the training supposed to end after the inauguration of President Macapagal-Arroyo.

Reached by telephone, ATO chief Milo Lanza confirmed there were "internal problems" between the managers and personnel but declined to give details on them.

"There are under inquiry," he said, adding the problems were being resolved out hoping Monday. The seven controllers, Lanza said, were not pulled out but were merely being "rotated."

He said there were "no safety implications to flights," emphasizing that competent personnel were running the APP.

Lanza dispelled reports of ATO neglect of the DMIA, saying "special treatment was being given to it because the development of the airport, named after the President's late father, President Diosdado Macapagal, was in the 10-point agenda of the President's full-six year term."

Capability

However, the source doubted the capability of Lanza, saying that the retired military general was just six months on the job.

The source said it was also unfortunate that the equipment at the state-of-the-rating cannot when bad weather and zero visibility usually happen in the Clark area.

The source said air traffic controllers are crucial because they handle the terminal control area, which covers a 35 nautical mile radius of DMIA from surface to 15,000 feet above.

The airspace, he said, is more complex because of the mountainous terrain, the coordinates with the Manila and Subic airports and the absence of radar.

"They are mathematical computations to be able to have a normal traffic picture," he said.

The source said the seven beleaguered controllers have so far been efficient and caused no accidents, handling daily at least eight jumbo UPS cargo jets, a regular passenger flight of PAL, South Korea's Asiana, and several international overflies to Manila and Cathay Pacific.

"The big stakeholders here are the airspace users," he said. "We use has the skill mix to perform [the traffic]. Controllers operate on a three-X hour shifts daily here."

Bohol, Cebu hit by mild earthquake

By Jhanna Napallacan
PDI Visayas Bureau

CEBU CITY—A magnitude 3.6 earthquake rocked Bohol and Cebu at 12:52 p.m. yesterday, according to the Philippine Institute of Volcanology and Seismology (Phivolcs).

Henry Peñaredon of Phivolcs-Manila said the tremor's epicenter was located under the sea in between eastern Bohol and Hinunan City, Southern Leyte.

The earthquake was tectonic in origin and its possible source was the submarine fault in the eastern part of Bohol province, he said.

Peñaredon said the local submarine fault can be considered minor, and cannot generate strong quakes unlike the tremor generated by the Philippine fault.

The quake was felt at intensity I and II in towns of Anda and Duero, Bohol. It was also recorded at intensity I in Alburo, Cebu, including the cities Talisay and Cebu, and Tubigon, Carmen and Tubigon Islands.

A mild aftershock was felt in Cebu City at about 4 p.m.

Bare deal with Ping, activist priests urge GMA

By Philip C. Tubeza

PRESIDENT Macapagal-Arroyo should disclose the political deal she supposedly offered Sen. Panfilo "Ping" Lacson in exchange for his support of her administration, according to the "running priest."

Fr. Robert Reyes and members of Gentlemen, an organization of activist priests, yesterday picketed the Department of Justice and assailed the apparent reconciliation between Ms Arroyo and Lacson, her former political rival.

"Why did Sen. Ping Lacson suddenly offer the hand of reconciliation after sustaining months-long point blank fire from the Joc-Joc tapes and after unveiling Malacañang's call for reconciliation and a "honeymoon" period, saying leading politicians would become friends only when there is threats called for it.

"Reconciliation seems to have transformed former enemies into friends," he said. "But beware of the other side of the coin of political expediency. Beware of sudden betrayals as well. Politics in the Philippines, as anywhere else, is Machiavellian, where the end justifies the means."

Political settlement

Chief State Prosecutor Jovencito Zuño said last week that Lacson's apparent reconciliation with the administration would not affect the murder case against him and 23 others.

He told reporters yesterday that a reconciliation between the administration and Lacson would involve only a political settlement.

Zuño pointed out that the Kuratong Baleleng case was already in the hands of the Supreme Court.

"We cannot do anything about it," he said. "It's for the Supreme Court to decide."

Government appeal

The tribunal is hearing a government appeal to overturn Quezon City Judge Ma. Theresa Dolores Gomez-Estoesta's decision on Nov. 13 dismissing the case against Lacson for lack of probable cause.

The government also wants Zuño sacked and disbarred for his ruling.

In a 205-page petition filed last March, Solicitor General Alfredo Benipayo said Zuño's actions bordered on biasing and libel.

Benipayo asked the tribunal to reverse Zuño's decision, order the case raffled to another branch of court, and declare immediately issue arrest warrants on Lacson and his co-accused.

The case stemmed from the alleged cabose of 11 suspected kidnapping Kuratong Baleleng members along Commonwealth Avenue in Quezon City on May 18, 1995.

Two of the 11, Shevelo Medrano and Melendres Sorosda, were witness when they were killed. Their birth certificates showed that Medrano and Sorosda were 17 and 14, respectively, at the time; the DOJ said.

No mea culpa from bishop ...

From page A1

ruling party to serve as executives—remained unopposed since.

Twenty women filed formal charges against Ente before the Manila Prosecutor's Office yesterday. Earlier, they issued a statement through the law firm Tan Acorda, Mendoza & Associates, addressed to the public and concerning his claims—especially that which said they "were made to act as nothing more than pitiful GROs" during a birthday dance for Vice Governor Luis "Baby" Asnoy on Saturday.

One was unharmed. He told the Inquirer in a phone interview: "I will not answer the case. I will not get a lawyer. I will not post bail. I will allow myself to go to jail."

Silencing the truth

He would show with his impersonator how well Pagtor could be, he said. "My intention is to call national attention to the evil of this Pagtor . . . this institutionalized gambling. This will silence just shake a little the government more. Whether people will rally against me or not, it's not the point."

Not even from the Catholic Bishops Conference of the Philippines, of which he was once president, would he accept legal assistance, Uriz stressed. He later issued a press statement saying Pagtor management was merely "using" the women "to silence the truth."

Uriz has long been a critic of the Pagcor's gambling operations. Whatever the outcome of the libel case, he said, he would stand his ground that Pagtor should be abolished: "It has too much money to dispose of. It has too much influence to [use to] corrupt. It is a vehicle that sows much graft and corruption. It has no place in a moral society."

Of his accusers, the prelate said he was merely "defending their dignity" as women and as Filipino citizens. "For some Filipinos to hurt their feelings," he maintained.

Rustom D. Nuesa told the 17 complainants from Pagcor Dayyu Cabiancan, Michelle S. Mariano, Khaizar Jay G. Mendoza, Agnes T. de Guzman, Lorita E. Cueto, Ma. Consuelo Helena Baja, Cherry Ann B. Razo, Ma. Monica J. Gonzalez, Joy Anne B. Estrella, Ma. Mirabella A. Rosales, Ernel C. Aday Ma. Daisy A. Rivera and Melynn M. Manalac:

Pride in work

"We are educated women who take pride in our work," they pointed out in the three-page statement distributed to reporters. They enumerated their tasks as acupuncture events participants, dealer trainer, administrative supervisor, marketing associate, advertising sales coordinator, assistant branch marketing manager, marketing associate, receptionist and clerks.

The three other women—Josh Zaldivar, Emilie Jimenez, and Idalia G. Medalla—were from the Office of the Vice Governor.

Uriz had brought their husbands "pain and embarrassment," the statement said.

They "voluntarily offered to serve as saboteurs" during the referendum, they insisted. "[It was] to honor and privilege for us to be able to participate in such a grand celebration and be in the presence of such august company."

False witness

Their pointed intercept to Uriz: "Those who are bear false witness against thy neighbor. He who has been given the noble duty of fostering peace and love should not use words of hostility and discord."

GMA hit for not addressing OFW's concerns in inaugural

PRESIDENT Macapagal-Arroyo drew flak from Migrante, a militant organization of overseas Filipino workers, for not addressing the rights and welfare of OFWs in her inaugural speech.

The 56-year-old accused her of planning to impose an additional 6 percent burden on OFWs.

"From plans to tax our hard-earned income [and] charge international airport security fees, along with hikes in various fees and levies in court documents, the government is set to bleed an OFW's profusely for the next six years," Migrante chair Connie Regue-Bragas said in a statement.

In a phone interview, Migrante media liaison officer Vince Bernardo said the Bureau of Internal Revenue had begun to draft plans to impose on overseas workers, including domestics, the same taxes imposed on locally based workers.

Bureau also mentioned the P550 airport terminal fee, as well as the government's alleged plan to raise passport fees.

"The plan to impose more fees has been floated previously, we have not seen the whole tax plan. But this will affect us," Bernardo said.

He said OFW remittances last year amounted to $7.6 billion, and pointed out that more taxes should not be imposed on the very people "helping keep the economy afloat."

"We are the targets for additional revenues even though we are not the ones to be blamed for the government's low revenues," Bernardo said.

Impossible, deceptive

Regalado described Mr. Arroyo's promise to create 6 to 10 million jobs during her six-year term as "practically impossible, to plain and deceptive."

"It is obviously anchored on unstable economic jobs locally and the volatile export of jobless people to places where their safety is left to the government to neglect and chance," she said.

The promise of 6.10 million jobs was part of the 10-point agenda of the program announced in her inaugural speech.

But Regalado said the promise did not offer anything new for OFWs and their families.

She said the Arroyo administration had even canceled welfare programs "initiated by overseas workers' contributions."

"It is only after our hard-earned remittances and dues are met about our rights, welfare and supposedly," Regalado said, adding:

"President Arroyo cannot beguile us with her rhetoric alone, if ever she had any. She will be the primary target of OFWs' rage and cynicism all throughout her term, if she manages to finish it." Marlon P. Sherfi and AFP

In or out of Cabinet? Moment of truth

From page A1

last meeting.

Mr. Arroyo flew in by helicopter from a thanksgiving Mass in Pototan, Iloilo. She told the media she would hold an early morning press conference today before flying off to Lanao and Tagaytay to monitor cease-and-desist efforts in the aftermath of typhoon "Ignie." Her brother, Representative Dakudao, Lanao del Norte, is running for governor in the May 10 elections.

Defiant Saddam rejects raps, says Bush real criminal

From page A1

Saddam defended the new union of Kuwait, saying it was "for the Iraqi people."

When he referred to the Kuwaitis as "dogs," the judge admonished him for using such language in a court of law.

The seven broad charges against Saddam are the killing of religious figures in 1974; gassing of Kurds in Halabja in 1988; killing the Kurdish Barzani clan in 1983; killing secretary of political parties in the last 20 years; the 1986-88 "Anfal" campaign of displacing Kurds; the suppression of the 1991 uprisings by Kurds and Shiites; and the 1990 invasion of Kuwait.

Specific charges will be filed later. Iraqi officials said. Those charges were expected to include war crimes, genocide and crimes against humanity.

A formal indictment with specific charges is expected later, according to Salem Chalabi, director of the Iraqi Special Tribunal. The trial is set opened until 2005.

Pinstriped jacket

Saddam wore a charcoal-colored, pinstriped jacket with an open-collar white shirt and black shoes. He often strolled his whitened, gray-and-black beard and he had heavy bags under his eyes, according to televised images of the proceedings.

He sat calmly, gesturing with his hands while addressing the court and sometimes taking notes on a piece of yellow paper.

His appearance was in sharp contrast to televised images of him after his December capture when he seemed haggard, his hair matted and longer and his face was gaunt and unkempt.

Saddam was ushered in front of the judge, with a wooden bar separating the two. The tape showed the judge from behind and from the side.

When asked if he could afford a lawyer, Saddam retorted, "The Americans say I have millions hidden in Switzerland. How can I not have the money to pay for one?"

Saddam was flown by helicopter from an undisclosed location and driven to the courtroom inside a US base, the report said. He was led from an armored bus escorted by two Iraqi prime guards and entered the courtroom door guarded by six more Iraqi policemen. The bus was escorted by four Humvees and an ambulance.

Strict post arrangements severely limited media access to the hearing. The pool video, which was shared by the US military, was initially broadcast without sound.

Under which law?

At one point, according to a censorship by state broadcaster Al-Iraqiya, Saddam asked the judge whether he would be ruled under laws from the Saddam era or "under which law?"

Saddam told the court that the US and multinational troops acting under the "coalition provisional authority" were occupiers, according to Al-Jazeera.

Saddam insisted on the judge referring to him as the "president of the Republic of Iraq" because "I would be respected as the will of the people," according to Al-Jazeera.

Saddam and 11 of his top lieutenants were transferred to Iraqi custody on Wednesday. They no longer are prisoners of war but are still locked up, with 100 forces in their jailers.

"The new legal way would be that the investigations were proper with investigative judges and investigators beginning the process of gathering evidence," the report said.

"Down the line, there will be no inducement, if there is enough evidence—obviously, and a reasonable team with respect to a trial date."

They were surprised that they were told they're in Iraqi custody," Chalabi told AP Radio.

President Ghazi al-Yawer told an Arab newspaper that Iraq's new government had decided to reinstate the death penalty which was suspended during the US occupation.

US and Iraqi officials hope the trial will lay bare the atrocities of Saddam's regime and help push the country toward normalcy after years of tyranny, the US-led invasion and the insurgency that blossomed in its aftermath.

But the trial could have the opposite effect, possibly widening the chasm among Iraq's disparate groups—Kurds, Sunnis and Shiites.

Trial of century

"It's going to be the trial of the century," National Security Adviser Mowaffak al-Rubaie told Associated Press Television News (APTN).

"Everybody is going to watch this trial, and we are going to demonstrate to the outside world that we in the new Iraq are going to be an example of what the new Iraq is all about."

Wednesday's transfer of legal custody took place in secret. Chalabi said the defendants were brought one by one into a room in an undisclosed location and informed of the change in their status in criminal custody. They were told they would appear in court within 24 hours to hear charges, he said.

According to Chalabi, the 67-year-old Saddam said, "Good morning," as he entered the room, listened to the official explanation, and was told he could respond to complaints on Thursday. He then was hustled away.

"Some of them looked very wrinkled," Chalabi said of the other defendants, who included former Deputy Prime Minister Tariq Aziz, the regime's best-known spokesperson in the West; Ali Hassan al-Majid, known as "Chemical Ali"; and former Vice President Taha Yassin Ramadan.

The initial proceedings are taking place under a blanket of secrecy because of fears that insurgents, many of them Saddam supporters, might exact revenge on participants.

Imam Ghazawi, a member of Saddam's defense team, said he received threats in a telephone call on Wednesday from someone claiming to be a minister of justice, who promised that anyone trying to defend Saddam would be "dropped to pieces."

US officials had hoped to begin proceedings against Saddam until the troops set up a special court and trained a legal team. But Prime Minister Iyad Allawi, whose government regained sovereignty on Monday, insisted publicly on taking legal custody of Saddam quickly. The handover came against the condition they keep him under US lock and key.

Major challenge

Trying Saddam and top regime figures presents a major challenge to the Iraqis and their American backers.

Allawi's government is due to leave office after the January elections, and a second national ballot will be held by December 2005. That raises the possibility that national politics on the prosecution of Saddam and his backers could change depending on the makeup of the government.

Most of Iraq's 25 million people were overjoyed when Saddam's regime collapsed, and many are looking forward to the trial for the ex-dictator.

"Everyone all over the world agrees that Saddam Hussein should be put on trial in front of the Iraqi people," Baghdad resident Mustafa Lami said.

However, the control of the judicial proceedings has led to hopes by the stability and order of the ousted dictatorship, at least among Sunni Arab Muslims who now find threatened by the possibility of a Shiite dominated government.

Nostalgia for Saddam—whose rule strongest in Sunni-dominated parts of the country most heavily involved in the insurgency.

"Saddam Hussein was a national hero and better than the current leaders in the government," a resident of Saddam's hometown of Tikrit told AFTX, refusing to give his name.

In Fallujia, an insurgent stronghold west of Baghdad, residents of the city destroyed rug gested the Americans be put on trial like Saddam: they "killed thousands of Iraqis in one year of occupation."

AP

PHOTO montage of Saddam Hussein flanked by two US soldiers in an Iraqi newspaper. AFP

Hip-swaying Saddam doll a hit in Baghdad

From page A1

go Blade" when turned on.

"It's funny, isn't it?" said Mustapha al-Kadumy, a young father as he browsed through a toy store in the wealthy Mansour district and prepared to buy one of the dancing Saddams.

"Tomorrow Saddam will go before an Iraqi judge and so today is a good day to make fun of him—we need to be able to smile after all the horrible things he's done to us."

REUTERS

'Igme' heads for Taiwan

HOMELESS in San Fernando, La Union: A little girl picks up whatever is left of her home after the fury of "Igme." AFP/TMO

Four of the fatalities were identified as Florentino Bebilen and Nenita Corpuz, both of Bugnay; Jennifer Ebdon of Alcoki, and Juan Talisoy of Gaitanan town.

The other victims, from Bugnay, Gaitanan, Pumpuna and Buggao towns, had yet to be identified, said Edna Annin, provincial social welfare director.

Bocos Sur

In Ilocos Sur, Mayor Jesus Ruivas Jr. of Santa town said five people were believed killed after the Abra River overflowed in the height of the typhoon.

Since Thursday, Ruivas said rescuers had been searching for the bodies of Ramon Bugnay, his wife Cherie and their children Ronald, 13; Ramel, 11, and Ramon Jr., 8, all of Barangay Cabuloplopan, Santa.

In Ilocos Norte, two people were reportedly killed while two others were missing. Louie Lagmay drowned in Laoag City, while another body was found in San Nicolas town.

The DSWD's head office in Quezon City said Jonellan Cumming of Poblacion 2, Pagudpud, died of a heart attack, while her town mate, Rodrigo Basilio, drowned.

Pangasinan

In Pangasinan, two girls drowned on Wednesday in Barangay Binanggay Balligi in Lasac town. Napoti said Rachel Gayanti and her cousin Jennifer Carbo, both 11, were catching frogs in a creek when a strong current swept them away. The DSWD identified the victims as Rachel Gayanan and Jennifer Basani.

The number of fatalities in the Cordillera rose to four after a man was crushed by a landslide on Wednesday night in Tinbo, Benguet.

Earlier, three people were buried in a landslide on Wednesday in Tabuk, Kalinga, just hellatan as earlier reported). They were Mary-Jane Balisi, Edsel Agapito and Merlilyn Molang.

The Office of Civil Defense also reported that nine people from Tinoc town in Ifugao were missing. Ulysses Tamayao, OCD Cordillera secretary, said motor workers had reported seeing bodies floating in the swollen Agupay River.

Three people were reported missing, while six others were injured in Benguet.

Landslides

Shamaria Quijon, 18, was rescued after a landslide near the Baguio General Hospital and Medical Center in Baguio City while workers saved Linda Ocic and Marnie Amos at Km 3 in Barangay Pico in La Trinidad, Benguet.

Two other landslide victims, Flora Ugumi and Mary Sigandawan, were rescued in Hungduan, Ifugao, on Wednesday while Richard Magalong, 16, survived a car crash in Bulalacao, Kalinga.

Igme (international codename: Mindulle) was still packing severe winds of 150 km per hour with gustiness of 180 kph when weather forecasters tracked it at 5 p.m. yesterday at 140 km southeastern of Basco, Batanes. It was moving north-northwest at 13 kph.

Signal No. 3 remained hoisted over the Batanes group of islands, while Signal No. 2 remained over the Calayan Islands, Apayao, Abra and the Ilocos provinces.

Isabela, Kalinga, Mountain Province, Ifugao, Benguet, La Union, Pangasinan, Tarlac and Zambales remained under Signal No. 1.

Impassable roads

To avoid further damage and loss of property, the Department of Public Works and Highways issued a list of "not passable" roads in the Ilocos region.

Included were the Nangalisan and Bacli section, Laoag-Aparri road, Laoag-Ilocos Norte-Cagayan road, Km. 472-473 of the Manila North Road, Ilocos Sur's Agpanayoc road and the Pias-Cucdiman-Pinsay road.

The DPWH announced that the Tagudin-Cervantes road and the Ilocos-Abra road in Ilocos Sur were closed to traffic due to landslides.

A total of 19,000 families in Cagayan had been evacuated to safe grounds due to flash floods.

Lucrecio Abras, regional technical division chief of the Department of Agriculture, said initial reports showed that 15,709 hectares of rice valued at P130.2 million and 11,296 hectares of corn estimated at P86.2 million were destroyed.

Gov. Edgar Lara deployed eight rescue teams, including a team sent by the Nueva Vizcaya government, to rescue victims in the mountain towns of Buggao, Alcoda, Lasam, Aparri, Gattaran and Amulung.

Tuguegarao Archbishop Diosdado Talamayan directed priests in 40 parishes to help collect and distribute relief goods to the victims.

State of calamity

Sorsogon was declared under a state of calamity during a special session by the provincial board, which allocated P28 million to help the victims. A total of 13,000 families in 199 villages had been displaced.

Laoag's city government also declared a state of calamity and allotted P3 million.

Its cars, logs, animals and appliances were seen floating on the Abra River. Floodwaters had reached the Quirino Bridge crossing the river, government engineers said.

Barangays Pagala, Nuroc, Bangbangcag, Labuo and San Miguel in Ilocos town were also flooded, the DCD-Cordillera said.

438 families evacuated

The office of the provincial agriculturist said crops worth over P6 million were destroyed. Damage to houses was estimated at P100,000, while 438 families were taken to evacuation centers.

Semigao Padewa of Sallapadan, Abra, has been missing since Wednesday, while two others were reported injured.

The DCD said Igme destroyed 86 houses in the Cordillera, affecting 8,332 families and causing the evacuation of 273 more families.

The swollen Chico River flooded the towns of Tabuk and Pinukpuk, both in Kalinga, Barangays San Antonio, Alan and Imelda of Pudtol town in Apayao were flooded after the Apayao River overflowed.

Officials said crop losses in Benguet were estimated at P13.14 million while those in Apayao reached P85 million.

National Power Corp. alerted the Bangalisan towns that it had opened its 7 gates to discharge at least 12 thousand of Ambuklao and Binga dams in Benguet. With reports from Jaime Laudiangco, Cristina Arandia, Leonicio Buffe Jr., Arthur Rivera, Rolando Gonzales Fuentes and Maurie Cabrera, PIA Northern Luzon bureau; Christine A. Avendaño, Martin P. Mayuga, Bernardo Bordadora, Rob Gonzales and Nikko Dizon in Manila

Malabon prosecutors agog over new offices

By Edson Casero Tandoc Jr.

PROSECUTORS and their staff in Malabon City are looking forward to leaving their current run-and-remodel container office, which they had to endure for more than four years.

The construction of a new prosecutors' building in Barangay Catmon is about 60 percent complete.

The new one-story building, which covers about 300 square meters, has eight rooms for prosecutors, a large room for the chief prosecutor, separate offices for the supply and computer rooms, a clinic and separate toilets.

Container vans

The three container vans the prosecutors would be leaving have only three offices and one toilet for the eight prosecutors and their staff members.

The prosecutors had to move to the container vans after a fire razed a hut adjacent to the City Hall in July 2000, deputy chief prosecutor Magno Pablo said.

The city government immediately provided two 20-foot container vans which eight prosecutors and their employees had to share. Chief prosecutor Jorge Catalan later got a 40-foot container van which became the "second floor" of the makeshift prosecutors' building.

One at a time

Because of the situation, inquest proceedings or preliminary investigations are conducted one at a time, with the parties involved asked to wait under the trees outside.

Things are about to change for the city prosecutors and their employees. But apparently, not that soon.

Based on the original schedule, the new building should have been completed seven days. The project began in April during the term of acting Mayor Myrna Yambao.

Yambao told the Inquirer yesterday the contractor could just have gotten apprehensive about the project because of the change in administration.

4 bus firms to run some units on natural gas

By Abigail L. Ho

MORE THAN 100 diesel-fuelled buses will switch to natural gas by the end of the year, the Department of Transportation and Communications (DOTC) said.

Four bus companies have decided to try a cleaner alternative, compressed natural gas (CNG), to fuel some of the buses on their fleets starting this year.

The bus operators are 168 Transport Inc., De Guia Enterprise Inc., NOA Airline and First CBG Inc.

They signed memorandums of agreement with the government last Tuesday, affirming their commitment to run CNG-powered buses under the government's Natural Gas Vehicle Program for Public Transport (NGVPPT) pilot project.

Energy Secretary Vincent Perez said in a statement yesterday that these bus operators would initiate the purchase of CNG-fuelled buses within two months after the signing of the agreement.

Before the year ends, these buses could already be playing local and other major routes.

Incentive

As an incentive to bus operators that will use CNG in their operations, the Land Transportation Franchising and Regulatory Board will fast-track the processing and approval of their certificates of public convenience.

The Land Transportation Office, on the other hand, will accelerate the registration process for them as well as the conduct of emission tests on the buses.

Steady supply

To ensure a steady supply of natural gas for the buses, the Department of Energy will be closely coordinating with the Malampaya Deep Water Gas-to-Power Project consortium for the establishment of refilling stations and other facilities in key locations.

The Department of Transportation and Communications, for its part, will give preferential treatment in terms of granting new and exclusive franchises to bus operators using CNG-powered buses in their operations.

"With this MOA, we are very hopeful that we will see ONE buses plying our major thoroughfares, a major step forward to cleaning our air," Perez said.

Interest

Interest on the government's NGVPPT cost last year when the DOE signed a MOA with the Malampaya consortium for the provision of natural gas at a price averaging only P9.36 a litre for the first seven years of implementation.

Manila execs meet, bury the hatchet

By Tarra F. Quismundo

FOR THE first time yesterday Manila's administration and opposition officials came together in one room and shook hands.

One and a half months after waging separate poll campaigns, and even hurling accusations against each other, the city's local officials were all smiles at the opening of the 6th City Council at the City Hall.

The 12 new council members were present, all eager to hold sessions.

Reelected Manila Mayor Jose L. Atienza Jr. of the Liberal Party, Manila's campaign manager for President Macapagal-Arroyo, stood beside Vice Mayor Danilo Lacuna, known supporter of failed presidential aspirant Fernando Poe Jr.

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Q&A

Monumento Circle now open to motorists

By Edson Caoero Tandoc Jr.

THE CONTROVERSIAL Bonifacio Monumento Circle (BMC) is now open to motorists.

Aides Isa nada taking yesterday on the BMC grounds, Mayor Enrique Echiverri opened the part of the rotunda which has pedestrian, former Mayor Reynaldo Malonzo had closed.

With Metropolitan Manila Development Authority Chief Bayani Fernando and some local officials, Echiverri pushed one of the roadblocks during the Edsa month of the rotunda to formally begin the reopening.

Echiverri also announced that motorists would pass through the rotunda starting today.

But while Echiverri was promising better traffic flow, vehicles in all roads going to the BMC were stuck-passed because his convoy and the vehicles of his guests were all parked around the rotunda.

Echiverri had earlier announced he would redesign the BMC and revamp the Historical Park, one of Malonzo's flagship projects during his term.

Malonzo had said the opening of the rotunda would just worsen the traffic problem.

Malonzo said the reopening would even risk the expressway users' businesses he had installed in the BMC parking malls because the BMC grounds would be accessible from any point.

"They should have studied the project thoroughly. Government funds will be wasted (with Echiverri's plan)," Malonzo said.

But Echiverri said it was Malonzo's administration which wasted government funds by spending for the wrong project.

He also said that before the area was reopened, they have already made necessary plans for a more effective traffic flow and a relocating plan.

Four major roads—Edsa, 17 Road, Avenue (between Boni Mendiola, Santolan Road) and the MacArthur Highway—all end up on the BMC area.

They paid dearly for a good act

TWO MEN paid dearly for helping a mugging victim in Divisoria Wednesday night.

Bonanio Albino and driver Celio gave chase to the three suspects who had snatched the bag of businesswoman Marilou Lopez, who was then shopping at the Divisoria mall.

Police said Albino caught up with one of the suspects, but the latter's companions pumped up on Albino and stabbed him.

Celio was hit when the suspects fired at him and other persons, police added.

Both Albino and Celio were brought to the Jose Reyes Memorial Medical Center, where Albino later died. Celio is still confined there.

Police, however, nabbed one of the suspects, whom they identified as Ricardo Reyes. He is now detained at the Western Police District's station 1.

Police also recovered the bag of the victim, including her cash worth P65,000.

Zeila R. Echavez-ia

Repair job on Angat turbines

TO PREVENT disruption of water supply to Metro Manila households, the various tunnels of Angat Dam, the capital's main reservoir, will be repaired this month.

The National Power Corp., which owns and operates the dam, said it could no longer postpone the repair work.

The NPC said the water level at the dam as of Wednesday was 168.31 meters, which is below the critical level of 180 meters. This is the best time to undertake repair because the tunnels are easily accessible, it added.

The NPC has assured residents there would be no disruption of water service during the repair work. Tina Santos

Single pass for tollways pushed

FORBES Sen. Victor S. Ziga, new chair of the Board of the PNCC Skyway Corporation (PNCC), has urged other tollway operators to open, operate and interchange a singular electronic toll collection system in all tolls and expressways.

The toll-road operators in Metro Manila today are the PNCC for the Skyway; to the Sucat; PNCC Exit; Alabang to Calamba Public Estate Authority for the Manila Cavite Coastal Tollway and the Tollway in Batangas.

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METRO

Desk Editor: Conrad B. Bibe, Editor-in-Charge: Dionisio G. Dipasupil

STRONG waves spawned by the strong winds of typhoon 'Igme' batter the Roxas Boulevard seawall and the Baywalk/Wednesday. (Rachel Ann Quinto)

Alert driver beats rob suspects to checkpoint

By Lujo del Puerto

NOT EVEN hours on alert Filipino drivers

Sensing a robbery inside his passenger jeepney driver Saul Infantes, 38, of Barangay 179, stopped on the gas and suddenly stepped in front of a Rapid Action Battalion Task Force (RATF) checkpoint on Marcos Highway, the police said.

This forced the robbers—four men and a woman—to scamper, the police said.

Chase and arrest

"All the police and soldiers in the area had to do was chase and arrest them," PO1 Procopio Ilacqua said over the phone.

Robbed were Reinaldo Decena, 30; Harris Castillo, 28; Gilberto Saulongson, 22; David Lasang, 23, and Gemma Lee, 28.

One of the suspects, the woman, managed to elude arrest, the police said.

Suspects told the police a man Lee who carried a 38-mm caliber pistol. The rest had fan knives, the police said.

Connection

The jeepney was traveling eastbound on Marcos Highway on its way to Antipolo City when they noticed a suspicious looking car in front moving bottleneck (Rizal, according to Ilacqua), who was on board a mobile car with a certain 9103 ribbon.

The driver could see the officers talking to each and decided to stop in front of the NAIA checkpoint.

"According to the driver, he saw the six robbers in separate inside the jeep," Ilacqua said. "So he said he did not wait for the group to become full.

"He said he was already looking for the police," the officer narrated.

Ferry captain falls into bay; rescue on

By Leila B. Salaverria

TUBIGON: Coast Guard operations are racing against time to rescue an anchor captain who fell into the Manila Bay while trying to board a ship being battered by strong winds from typhoon "Igme."

Responder Capt. Luis Pinero has been missing since Wednesday afternoon after falling off a ladder while trying to board the ferryboat 10 at the Manila South Harbor, said PO2 spokesperson Armand Balilo.

"PO2 divers are working overtime to look for Capt. Pinero," he said yesterday. Pinero, as anchor captain, is in charge of "parking" the ships in the harbor.

No life jacket

Pinero, a PO2 report stated, was not wearing a life jacket when he lost his balance and fell into the Manila Bay.

The crew members of the ferryboat 10, who witnessed the incident, immediately threw a life ring, which the captain caught.

When Pinero reached the ladder and tried to climb aboard it, he apparently felt hindered by the life ring and removed it.

However, strong waves subsequently hit him and caused him to fall into the water for the second time.

Difficult

Balilo said a typhoon filled with tropic potential cited to rescue Pinero again but the rough seas made the rescue difficult.

The rescuers also had to stop their search at 7 p.m. on Wednesday because of the poor visibility caused by the weather, but resumed the search when the rain and wind let up.

Manila 'riles' folk clean up site with help from Canadian pals

By Tarra V. Quismundo

PEOPLE living along the railroad tracks in Manila woke up to sunshine yesterday, just the perfect weather for a day of cleaning up their homes of railroad tracks and a circle of savings.

The men, women and children of the urban poor community in Pasco and Pandacan districts stood, hovered and chorused as the cleaning operation, helped along by Canadian friends.

Canadian envoy

At the start of September's celebration of World Canada Day, Canadian Ambassador Peter Sutherland, with Jo-Lynne and Corporal Brennan Hay, chief of the Royal Canadian Mounted Police, led residents in the cleaning that spawned several barangays in Pandacan and Paco.

"The environment belongs to all of us, we have a shared responsibility to maintain it," said Sutherland, already sweat-soaked in his polo.

At 9 a.m., the Canadians arrived at the idle community, which lies down the stretch of Quirino Avenue, with shanties and concrete houses lining the railroad tracks and others snaking through alleys.

The Tondo de Pandacan cuts through the area, catching trash and drainage-water from houses in the process.

Through the alleys and near the trash, barbecued were moved to see the residents who never out of their homes to clean up, collecting the trash in plastic bags and wooden carts.

"We saw the need for us to clean up our own community. There are many people here and so there is much trash," said Jenet Umali, of organizer Green Mind Foundation Inc. (GMFI), a community organization.

Project

With its fellow community group Interes de Pandacan Neighborhood Association, GMFI came up with a development project for the community two years ago, with the goal of giving a proper system of waste management for the residents.

The community groups involved barangay officials in organizing residents to take part in the project. The groups aim to implement the cleaning in 153 barangays in the two districts.

Financial aid

The local organizations tapped the Canada Fund for Local Initiatives, a program of the Canadian Embassy which has been providing financial aid for community development projects in the country since 1972. When Canada Fund got into the project in November last year, they provided P374,000.

The fund has been used for the GMFI's advocacy programs for residents, and to purchase cleanup equipment and the steel rope to collect waste in Estero de Pandacan.

Yesterday's cleanup was the first such environmental project in Metro Manila for Sutherland, and he is looking forward to much more.

MetroBriefs

Trader nabbed

POLICE nabbed a 57-year-old businessman for allegedly duping millions of pesos from several prospective overseas Filipino workers in Quezon City.

Senior Police Director Oscar Valiente ("Jun") Bangit Cunanan identified the suspect as Rico Abalos, owner of Bandar Marketing, and resident of Tinguha Street on P. Tuazon Boulevard, Cubao. Abalos was nabbed at 11:45 a.m. at Bugallo Street, where the suspect reportedly planned to set up his new office. Also arrested in the suspect's car was identified by the complainants as a certain Nilo Ramos. Tina Santos

Rob try foiled

POLICE foiled a robbery attempt in Las Piñas City the other day, arresting four armed suspects. The suspects were identified as Nelly Pantaleon, Raymund Torres, George Andres and Jonathan Hernandez, all of Barrio Cadena, Las Piñas. Police recovered from the suspects two homemade shotguns, five bullets for a .45-caliber gun and a grenade. Tina Santos

Drowning in dam

TWO CHILDREN were swept by strong currents and drowned while swimming at the La Mesa Dam complex in Quezon City yesterday afternoon. Police identified the fatalities as Albert Matabuan, 9, and Mark Christopher, 10, both grade five pupils at the Nova University School and residents of Payatas, Quezon City. The bodies of the victims were found and retrieved 3 p.m. by the Quezon City Rescue Team. Police were informed of the drowning incident by Matabuan's older brother Anthony. Tina Santos

3 cops charged

TWO DRUMMERS of the Central Police District have been charged before the Quezon City Prosecutor's Office for alleged negligence of duty which led to the escape of a drug suspect. Charged with evasion through negligence were SPO4 Edgardo Nabua Jr. and PO2 Ruelito Pabay, deputy chief of the District Anti-Illegal Drugs Special Operation Task Force and desk officer of the CPD La Loma Police Station, respectively. The two were found guilty for the escape of drug suspect Hector Dimaano, who faces a pending trial before a Manila court. Dino Ramirez

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Federer-Roddick showdown looms

WIMBLEDON, England—Wimbledon is two matches away from the men's final everyone wants to see: Roger Federer vs Andy Roddick.

Sydney's clay-top-seeded defending champion with the classic all-court game; No. 2 Roddick is the US Open champ with the brute-power and blast serve in tennis.

Federer optimizes forms reserve; Roddick owns American loudness.

They met in the Wimbledon semifinals last year, with Federer winning in straight sets. He went on to beat Mark Philippoussis for his first Grand Slam title.

This time, they reached the semis from opposite halves of the draw.

On Friday, Federer will face Sebastien Grosjean—a third round semifinalist from last year—and Roddick will play 20-year-old Blake Bryan, a protege of former Croatian champion Goran Ivanisevic.

The semifinals and finals were set for Thursday with 1999 champion Lindsay Davenport leading off on Center Court against 13-year-old Russian star Maria Sharapova, followed by two-time Wimbledon champion Serena Williams against Amelie Mauresmo.

Another finalist from last year by beating Tatiana Golovin, the next woman he overcame as champion last year, in a compelling Center Court match that ended just before dusk Wednesday night. Federer won, 6-1, 6-7 (5), 6-0, 6-4, to extend his grass-court winning streak to 22 matches.

Federer lost his first set of the tournament against Hewitt. He also was broken for the first time in 183 service games at Wimbledon, going back to last year's quarterfinals. Sort of. For the break put Hewitt up in the fourth set, Federer broke right back and proceeded to close out the match. He finished with 11 aces.

Roddick, who hasn't lost a set in his match-es, outslugged Xinyu Schalken, 7-6 (4), 7-6 (3), 6-3. He served 16 aces and closed the match with a leaping overhead winner, though he mistimed his jump and landed off-balance—not quite the graceful "slam-dunk" style popularized by Pete Sampras during his runs to seven titles.

Unseeded Antony upset No. 5 Tim Henman, 7-6 (2), 6-4, 6-2, leaving the 29-year-old British player wondering if he's running out of time in his quest to become the first home-grown man's Wimbledon champion since Fred Perry in 1936.

Ancic is the last player to beat Roddick at the All England Club—he did it in the first round in his Wimbledon debut in 2002. Nicknamed "Super Blade," the 6-foot-5 Ancic is often compared with the 6-foot-4 Ivanisevic, who reached last week after losing to Roddick.

Roddick and Ancic played each other for the first time last month, with Roddick winning, 7-6 (3), 4-6, 7-4, on grass at Queen's Club. AP

ANCIC celebrates his victory over Henman.

Unequal race distribution

THE PHILRACOM, the country's governing body for horseracing, should do something about its racing schedule which gives the lower category horses more races than the higher category ones.

Rather than have a system where the lower category horses get more races and have fewer purses, I said Manuel Lim, racing guru and longtime Philippine stockbroker George Stribling. "There should be more incentives for higher-class owners," added Stribling, a wealthy industrialist director of the Philippine Jockey Academy who has been living here for the last 22 years.

Stribling says a lack of quality races for the higher category horses. While the lower category horses compete in eight races during weekdays and 12 races during weekends (Saturdays and Sundays), the higher category horses seldom get the same opportunity due to a limited number of big-time races in the calendar prepared by the Philippine Racing Commission.

Philippine Racing Commission should urge more big-time races for the higher category horses since these horses are certified crowd-pleasers. I say these horses are not only boring, but they are worth watching, being the top attractions of any racing event either at the Santa Ana oval or the San Lazaro Leisure Park in Carmona, Cavite.

And while on the subject of horseracing, I'm just curious: How come suspended jockey got off the hook so easily? How come the age-old problem of illegal bookies is still so widespread? What ever happened to the drug abuse of the reported delay in the payment of winner's prizes?

CLEAN LIVING

Manuelo R. Diego

Portugal makes Euro final, finally

DAVOR Edgar Davids grimaces in pain during the Portugal-Netherlands semifinal.

Czechs, Greeks clash in other semifinal

PORTO, Portugal—The last-time Greek Republics reached the European Championship final is started of the competition as a result-out-sider. Now Greece is the underdog in Thursday's Euro 2004 semifinal...

The Greeks stated two games away from one of the biggest surprises in European Championship history. But first, awards Otto Rehhagel's battling team must beat the top-scoring Czechs at Porto's Dragao stadium. AP

LISBON, Portugal—Portugal advanced to the final of a major soccer championship for the first time on Wednesday by beating the Netherlands, 2-1, in the semifinals of Euro 2004.

Cristiano Ronaldo headed home a corner in the 30th minute and Nuno Maniche drove a stunning 20-meter strike into the top left corner of Edwin van der Sar's goal in the 58th to put the host two goals ahead before a Jorge Andrade own goal gave the Dutch some hope.

The Portuguese, who lost 2-1 to underdog Greece in the opening game, finally made it to a championship game after semifinal exits at the 1984 World Cup and the 1984 and 2000 Euros.

The Dutch, who were the Euro title in 1988, lost in the semifinals for the second time in a row, having been beaten by Italy four years ago in Amsterdam.

Bolivia 46,679 fans at Sporting Lisbon's Jose Alvalade Stadium, the Portuguese regularly opened up as Dutch defense missing injured veterans Frank de Boer and could have gone in to half time two or three goals ahead.

In the ninth minute Luis Figo, who was the main source of the host Portuguese moves and was named man of the match, broke down the right and sent over a low cross but Ronaldo, sliding in just three meters from the goalline, was unable to get his foot on the ball.

But the Portuguese were soon ahead, this time from a corner.

Ronaldo won it on the left, Deco delivered the cross and the teenager was perfectly positioned and unmarked to head home from three-range. AP

Gabito . . .

Julius Nerio, Jhun Ang, Boston Rivera and Elmer Candelaria Jr. added a 1st third in the men's 4x400m relay. The Indians clocked 3:08.05, while the Sri Lankan third 3:08.51. The Philippine team is five-second best.

The SEA women's team raised 4:19.01, 30 seconds behind winner Sri Ratnbhima. India clocked a second time of 3:13.91, which bested this team fourth of 3:13.28.

Randhawa's friendship Christine Ang brought tenth and tenth with Rakesh Yadav of fourth double in the first 50 meters before taking the men's century-station 10.36.

Ivory Urgel was plucked out of his favorite triple jumps and passed the 16m bar the Filipino ended up sixth with a fine of 10.71.

Tiger seeks fourth Western crown

LEMONT, Illinois—Tiger Woods already has achieved the last week at the PGA Tour's $4-million Western Open, which begins Thursday at the Cog Hill Golf and Country Club.

The world's No. 1 player and a tournament record with a 22-under-par 267 and rolled to a five-stroke victory over Hoch three last year for his third title...the first time came in 1997 and 1999.

Woods won 10 under on the front nine compared with his total of 3 under on the back of the par-72 course, which has a 7,107-yard layout.

A win at the time would put Woods within one victory of the all-time Western Open mark of five titles held by Walter Hagen.

But Woods has yet to win a stroke-play event this year with his best result a third place showing in the Masters. Two weeks ago, he tied for 17th at the US Open. AP

WOODS

US Open on; Jenny among starters

SOUTH HADLEY, Massachusetts—The only showcase on the US Women's Open is hour the putting green in the clubhouse.

Players got a wraparound watch down drivers during their practice rounds, and even the long hitters found they have their work cut out for them.

Orchards Golf Club a 6,646-meter (6,072-yard) and plays even longer because of the course grass, gentle bends in the tree-lined fairways and elevated greens that mean he catered to current specs.

Asian hitters stationed up the course in four-to-th...

"Long, long, long," she said, "and long."

The long road to finding a winner of the most prestigious event in women's golf started Thursday, with Annika Sorenstam and Grace Park among the favorites, and Michelle Wie and Paula Creamer among the record 16 teenagers in the 156 players field.

Joining Filipina Jennifer Rosales, a big winners who is paired with Australian Karrie Webb, are 30-time favorite Dekunt and Ha Quincaro, a qualifier.

It wasn't be anything like last year.

The Orchards is the opposite of Pumpkin Ridge in Oregon, where the longest Women's Open scorer in history, at 6,849 meters (6,500 yards), played as one of the shortest because of cruel, dry conditions.

"The last three holes, you play those in even par for the week and you'll be in contention," Sorenstam's Karrie Webb said.

Only when they set foot on the course do they get a rude reminder what lost make. The Women's Open is the toughest test they face all year, and this is no exception. AP

FP PRIDE

Mike Reaser (inset) of Tucson Racing-Addict-Mobile-rules his arm in jubilation as he delivers the second crown for the Philippines in the Race Plus Masters class of the 2004 Castrol Filipino-Shell Asian Karting Open Championships at the Carmona Circuit Philippines in Carmona, Cavite.

A DUD INTERESTING SETS

The best of the side seats in the Philippine Basketball Association between popular Barangay Ginebra and come-up-the-Red Bull Barako in the PBA Fiesta Conference home-up tonight at the Big Dome.

Although coach King Conte's Barakos lost to Bet Yanigiaro's Elite Kings, 94-92, in the series opener before a sellout crowd of 18,000 on Wednesday, the odds will be about even tonight.

Down by 20 points at the end of the first quarter (30-12), Red Bull rally-mates back from that huge deficit, tying the score at 90-90 and then moving ahead (92-91) in the last 33 seconds of play following a free Villanueva swisser.

But with 24 ticks to go, Eric Kings' Rodney Juniors scored from the corner to deliver what turned out to be the game-winner.

In Game 1, Red Bull was a big letdown, allowing Ginebra's striker Mark Caguioa to sink three-pointers one after the other. At the end of the first quarter, the Gin Kings had a commanding 22-12 lead which they never let go, easier Barkwood. The Barakos did borrow from that initial shock as Dan Villanueva wasted her in the second quarter together with Jaymell Tolen, Mick Pennisi, Jonny Valenzuela and Victor Thomas.

Despite Red Bull's last-ditch rally in the closing seconds of the game, Ginebra kept its cool, doing one final pounding 94-92 win.

RACING POST

BUSINESS

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John Paul D. Marcelo
Assistant Editor Connie E. Nicolas

Bangko Sentral keeps key rates steady

By Doris C. Dumlao

THE MONETARY Board of the Bangko Sentral ng Pilipinas decided to keep borrowing rates steady at its policy meeting yesterday despite a 25-basis point rate increase by the US Federal Reserve.

"The BSP's policy rates have been kept at 6.5% for overnight borrowing and at 9 percent for overnight lending for the last 18 months or since July last year.

"The latest assessment suggests that the prevailing conditions for output and inflation continue to support the argument for maintaining the present monetary settings," the central bank said in a statement.

BSP Governor Rafael Buenaventura said the US Fed's move did not warrant a corresponding increase in the local rates.

"The board affirmed its position that the BSP should be concerned with exchange rate volatility when there is threat of disorderly movements and when such movements could affect price stability," he said. The US Fed increase was already factored in by most analysts and that is no longer has any significant repercussions on the peso since volatility could have inflationary impact, he added.

"The inflation environment in the months ahead does not warrant a shift towards an immediate monetary tightening given that the recent upturn in both headline and core inflation would be traced to relative price changes involving selected CPI [consumer price index] components, and not to any broad-based," he said.

BUENAVENTURA

"Demand-side pressures on core prices also continued to be tempered by evidence of double-digit unemployment, spare manufacturing capacity and subdued credit growth," he said.

The Monetary Board also believed that current expectations of higher inflation next year were largely tied to supply-side developments such as higher utility charges and energy prices, which led to the recent wage and transport fare adjustments.

"The impact of these supply-side factors on inflation is likely to be transitory and thus, not likely to be influenced by monetary actions," Buenaventura said.

At the same time, the board agreed that the conditions for production growth continued to support a mood for policy accommodation remain in place.

"The presence of continued subpar output in domestic demand, the absence of any sharp upswing in credit and investment activity, and the possibility of downside risks to external demand argue against the withdrawal of the policy stimulus in the near-term," he said.

IMF sending team of tax experts to RP

THE INTERNATIONAL Monetary Fund will send a tax mission to the Philippines to help the government formulate new fiscal steps to trim the country's budget deficit and raise P80 billion to P100 billion in additional revenue yearly.

Bangko Sentral ng Pilipinas Governor Rafael Buenaventura, who chairs the Philippine panel in the negotiations with the IMF, said the tax experts, who are expected to arrive in the next few weeks, would complement an IMF mission that is now in town to assess the country's economic program.

Buenaventura said the IMF experts would focus on helping the economic team find ways to reduce the government's budget deficit.

"They won't be here to dictate on what tax measures to adopt or what the rates should be," Buenaventura said.

"They will simply say, here's a menu of measures adopted in other countries and the rates, you can choose what is suitable to you," he said.

At the moment, he said the existing IMF position was "cautious" on the proposed shift in the basis of corporate taxes to gross income from net earnings.

"What's important to them is the end result, that is to reduce the budget deficit," he said.

Regarding the proposed measure on rice smuggling, which has been met with opposition from some sectors, he said alternative methods might have to be found.

Based on the Philippine economic team's assessment, he said the country would need to raise P80 billion to P100 billion in additional

DTI backing $180-M nickel plant in Palawan

By Konrad W. Domingo

THE DEPARTMENT of Trade and Industry yesterday backed the $180-million nickel processing plant being built in Palawan, which could not operate due to a lack of certification from another government agency.

Trade Secretary Gracc T. Pursuma called on the National Commission on Indigenous People to issue to the project proponent, Coral Bay Nickel Corp., a certificate of precondition that the Bureau of Mineral Development from the firm.

Pursuma said the certificate would allow CBNC to proceed with the project, which is already 90 percent complete.

He said company officials had told him that although they had done their best to complete the necessary requirements, the project's implementation was long past schedule because of the issuance of that one last document.

Without the document, the nickel processing project would not be able to contribute to the country's economy. The plant is expected to generate $112 million or about P6.2 billion in revenue.

Suits on the project showed that the plant would process 35 million wet metric tons of low grade nickel ore over the next 20 years.

CBNC is a joint venture among Japanese firms Sumitomo Metal Mining Co. Ltd, Mitsui & Co. Inc. and Nisshin Steel Co., and the Philippine Mining Corp.

The firm is putting up a hydrometallurgical processing complex in Sarangani, Palawan. It will process low grade ore considering of waste material from the Rio Tuba Nickel Mining Corp. based in Cotabato.

The project also involves the installation of a hydrogen sulfide plant, a limestone quarry in Conda, water supply and drainage system, two tailing dams, coal-fired power plant and port facilities.

The company will use current uses and processing technology that would process nickel ore into nickel cobalt mixed sulfide.

CBNC reported that it had employed 2,500 workers for the building of the plant and had directly hired 85 plant employees.

Last week, the United Nations Development Program and the European Commission announced they had signed two separate agreements last week on the grant of some P5 million in funds for the training of indigenous people in Odisseia on the management of forests and their associated dynamics.

Napocor takes over steam plant

TIAK PAPE SUN National Power Corp. yesterday took over the operations of the 15.75-megawatt (MW) Mak-Ban Binary Geothermal Power Plant in Laguna after its 30-year build-operate-own contract with American firm Ormat Inc. expired Wednesday.

The two-unit Mak-Ban plant started commercial operations on June 30, 1979 in Barrio Bitin, Laguna.

Napocor now has the option to re-bid out contracts operating the plant or privatize it.

If the facility will not be offered for sale and will just be operated, it will be placed under the state firm's Asserts Preservation Department.

Ormat, the third largest geothermal independent power producer in the United States, still has two power plant projects in the Philippines, both in the province of Leyte.

These plants include the 40-MW Leyte geothermal optimization project and the 125-MW Upper Mahiao combined cycle geothermal plant.

Abigail L. Re

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A new president, a fresh start

By Brenna M. Cledera

TWO DAYS ago, even hours after the inaugural speech of President Gloria Macapagal-Arroyo, key leaders from the Alyansa Agribusiness Inc. became the implementers of her 10-point program on agribusiness. The Alyansa Agribusiness is the nation's largest farmer-fishermen's coalition today. It is composed of 20 national and local federations and organizations representing the major agricultural sectors of crops, fruits and vegetables, livestock and poultry, and fisheries.

Prior to the May 11 elections, the Alyansa Agribusiness coalesced nationwide consultations for over a year to formulate a proposed presidential agriculture agenda. Called a "common agri-fishery action agenda with special attention to small farmers and fisherfolk," it was presented to all the presidential candidates to determine their positions on the stated agenda recommendations. The Alyansa would make known through this how the candidates' positions to help the farmers and fisherfolk with their voting decisions.

The agenda was summarized in a two-page document which had two parts. The first part covered overall issues such as support to agriculture, trade regime, agrarian reform, women, indigenous people, and governance. The second part specified the two to three most important action recommendations in each of the major agricultural commodity sectors.

Except for some minute deals on the Alyansa recommendation of fully implementing RA 8435 17, the farmers agreed with all the key items in the proposed agenda. DAO 17 formalizes and delineates municipal waters within 15 kilometers of the shoreline to give priority to small fisherfolk.

After studying Ms Arroyo's inaugural speech, the Alyansa leaders concluded that her speech was completely consistent with the support she pledged for the Alyansa proposed agenda before the election.

Analysis

In her speech, Ms Arroyo said: "I pledge to bring you a pro-poor agenda that will lift up our poorest brothers and sisters, treat them with dignity, and imbue them with hope." The Alyansa leaders noted that this supported the small farm and fisherfolk emphasis given by their proposed agricultural agenda.

In addition, the very first three of the Ms Arroyo's 10-point program for the next six years prominently touch potential for the agricultural sector.

"I shall have created more than six million jobs, perhaps, even 10 million jobs." The Alyansa leaders said that they will work for many of these jobs will be created in the agricultural sector, which today comprises 46 percent of the labor force and where poverty is most prevalent. Special attention will be given to job creation in the coastal municipalities, which have the greatest incidence of poverty.

"I shall have supported these million entrepreneurs by giving them loans and helping them become good managers," consistent with the proposed agricultural agenda which highlights the importance of farmers as entrepreneurs and their need for credit, it is our objective that many of the these million entrepreneurs targeted for loans will come from the agriculture sector.

"I shall have developed 1 million hectares, if possible, 2 million hectares of agricultural land by making them productive and transporting their products to the markets efficiently." Today we have approximately 13 million hectares of agricultural land. Ten million are developed to varying degrees, while the remaining three million hectares are potentially developable. Precisely the idea of developing 1 to 2 million hectares in an efficient and effective manner is consistent with the "Support to Agriculture" section of the Alyansa's proposed agriculture agenda. These hectares can also serve as models for the rest of the country which will be hailed mostly by private sector initiative.

The President's emphasis on bringing the products to market efficiently is likewise consistent with the "marketing" section of the Alyansa's agenda, where optimal marketing distribution systems are proposed.

Joint responsibility

Cabinet Secretary Federico D. Pascual Jr. once reminded: "We expect the President to elaborate on her 10-point agenda as she and her Cabinet resume their work. There are those who might dismiss her agenda outright without offering any viable alternative. But we think the better course is to give her a chance, while keeping a close watch on how she goes about doing it."

We agree with Mr. Pascual. But the Alyansa leaders want to go one step further. They propose that we jointly work with the President in elaborating on her agenda, especially the first three points which have a direct impact on agriculture. That she already agreed with the Alyansa's proposed agricultural agenda even before the elections indicates that this elaboration is not far from completion.

The Alyansa also believes that it is not enough to keep "a close watch on how she goes about doing it." Alone our aim is to be a united people that competes successfully against any country in today's global economic arena, we should not be limited to watching. We have a joint responsibility with the government in ensuring our national development. Just as we are entitled to watch the President perform her responsibilities, she is likewise entitled to expect performance on our part. That performance from the agricultural private sector is what the Alyansa leaders say they intend to deliver.

Conclusion

Today, we have a new president. Her inaugural speech holds much hope for agricultural development and the improved welfare of our farmers and fisherfolk. With the new presidency comes the potential for a new beginning. The presidency of the 30 federations and organizations that make up the Alyansa Agribusiness hopes to assist President Arroyo in the next future to work with her in attaining accomplishing the goals she specified during her first day in office. With the new presidency, we must now unite as a nation for a new beginning, especially for the much neglected agriculture sector.

(The author is chair of Agrinurah, a private sector initiative; former undersecretary of agriculture; and trade and industry, and former chair and Cabinet secretary for Presidential Flagship Programs and Projects. For inquiries or suggestions, e-mail agrinurah@yahoo.com or telefax 82-83-5655)

COMMENTARY

IMF sending . . .

From page B1

dational yearly revenue—particularly in the next three years—to significantly reduce the consolidated public sector debt. The need for higher revenue became more pressing with the government's decision to absorb the huge debts of National Power Corp.

"The additional revenue will spur economic activities and leave some savings for higher capital expenditures and for the improvement of existing infrastructure," he said.

He said the 4.5 percent growth in gross domestic product next for the country in the past few years was "clearly not sufficient."

"We have catch up with other economies in the region," he said.

Bernardino said the IMF mission reviewing the country's economic performance favored the administration's economic program.

Recently, international credit rating firm Fitch Ratings warned of further sovereign credit rating downgrade for the Philippines if the government would not be able to shore up its fiscal position and find a lasting solution to power-sector debt woes. Doris C. Dumlao

Piltel–Smart

DEADLY has consistently denied it plans a backdoor listing through Piltel.

But under the proposed re-capitalization plan unveiled yesterday, where blocks and blocks of preferred shares would be converted into common shares, Ahnart could end up owning as much as 92 percent of the publicly listed Philippine Telephone Corp. by September.

This figure, 92 percent, we got from PLDT Group spokesperson Ramon Isberto himself.

Piltel is currently 46 percent owned by PLDT, which in turn wholly owns the country's largest cellular company Smart.

Despite its listed status and pioneering history, Piltel, as a result of the more than P40 billion in "hidden" accounting losses, has been reduced to being a brand of Ahnart while undergoing rehabilitation. For a certain fee, Ahnart handles Piltel's engineering, technical, marketing, accounting and administrative requirements, even providing the warm bodies to the Piltel board.

Despite a 12-member board complement, Piltel only has two employees, president Gregorio Ricafort, and his secretary. Both hold office in Ahnart headquarters on Ayala Avenue, mainly to make sure that there would be real persons to meet visiting creditors, sign the documents and prepare the checks.

Now, as to whether the 92 percent ownership of a listed company would satisfy the government's listing requirements for Ahnart or, put another away, whether the conversion plan would effectively list Ahnart through the backdoor, your guessing guess is as good as mine.

Ahnart, tantalizingly, would not even hazard a comment.

Pride in stock market players: Cocktales does not care, whether directly or beneficially, in any PLDT, Smart or Piltel shares.)

No Rockwell 'Gilage'

GILAGE, for non-Filipinos, is Manila slang for "gilid ng village," literally "invader-adjoining the village," referring to the pocket of shanties that inevitably sprout outside the perimeter of an affluent subdivision, often using the gated village's concrete fence as shanty wall.

Perhaps today's "middle-class" description of Philtown's upcoming condominium in the medium Metropolitan Club grounds, right

COCKTALES

Victor C. Agustin

across the street of the upscale Rockwell complex, prompted an immediate clarification from the Concepcion company.

"It is condominium with very good value investment since it is (priced) very competitively at around P75,000/a square meter with free membership in the soon-to-be-renovated Mimosa Athletic Club," said a Philtown official.

The official said the proposed condo has sold almost 10 percent of the units in just three months, on the strength of just the building plan. The reputation of the family behind the project and the location.

"Good value proposition+ nothing to cheat sales performance (probably would be the case, see why competitors in the area are worried," the official smiled.

Over at Lopez-owned Rockwell, where condo units range from P68,000 to P82,000 per sq.m., the latest condo project, Joya, with its Fire in the country left smile, seems to be

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selling the units as well.

Just a week after opening its model unit, Joya has sold 25 percent of the units reserve 1500 units, said Rockwell Land president Nestor Padilla.

And with the Metropolitan Manila Development Authority finally awarding itself of an income-hauling bridge to connect Rockwell with Mandaluyong across the Pasig River, Rockwell, to less crowded itself, and even the Ad Village would become more accessible.

Yet, the new bridge should make even Rockwell Gilage even more desirable.

Cris-Cruz

FIRST, let me introduce her as a Real Boss volunteer. Now, CBK counsel Avelino J. Cruz Jr. is being asked if he is the same lawyer staunchly defending Fernando Poe Jr.

The pro-GMA Cruz, nicknamed "Nonong," wants to make it clear that he is very much younger, at 50, than FPJ counsel Avelino "Boy" E Cruz, who is pushing 66.

The namesake Cruz happens to be one of the "Cs" in Accra, the law firm of Sen. Edgardo Angara.

Apparently, there is a third Lawyer who is also named Avelino Cruz, but whose middle initial is "L." This Cruz is about the same age as Boy Cruz, but hails from Bacolod, unlike Acc Cruz who is from Pasig and a graduate of San Beda College, like Boss.

Nonong Cruz, in turn, comes from Malabon, a town inside graduate of UP College of Law and a member of Carpio Villaroza and Cruz, aka The Firm, before being drafted into the GMA Cabinet as presidential legal counsel in 2001. He resigned last December to help in the GMA campaign.

There is another Avelino Cruz, this time Avelino III, a son of Nonong Cruz who, had he had a choice, would have preferred a less austere moniker/name, according to the father.

And, unlike the father, Avelino III has quoted law in favor of a management course in Ateneo.

Heard through the grapevine

THE INSULATION of a government-appointed comptroller last year and the improved economy have failed to stem around on ailing personnel pension, its total fund deficiency now rising from P2.3 billion in 2003 to a cruelly worrisome P17 billion as of mid-2004.

To make matters worse, the personnel company was found to be plagued also by P1.4 billion.

With its too big-to-fail status, run to translate the company's high political connections, the Insurance and Exchange Commission is clearly in a bind.

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A tradition of leadership

Domestic liquidity up 6.1% in May

Higher foreign reserves, increase in loans fuel growth, says BSP

By Doris C. Dumlao

THE COUNTRY's domestic liquidity supply, consisting the funds available for the economy, expanded by 6.1 percent in May from a year ago on the back of higher foreign reserves and loan growth.

The Bangko Sentral ng Pilipinas yesterday reported that the sustained growth in domestic liquidity or M3, was supported by the increase in the net foreign assets of the monetary system, as well as the improvement in net domestic credits.

The annual growth of M3 in May, however, was a slight deceleration from the 6.6 percent year-on-year expansion in April.

The seasonally adjusted M3 grew by 1.4 percent in May from the previous month, picking up from the 0.6 percent uptick in the preceding month.

This developed as the net foreign assets of the monetary system rose by 8.6 percent due mainly to the increase in the BSP's gross international reserves, which was accompanied by a decline in the sum of net foreign liabilities.

On the other hand, the growth in domestic credits was brought about by a 20.1-percent increase in lending to the public sector. Credits to the private sector likewise expanded by 2.6 percent compared to the annual growth of 1.9 percent the previous month.

MRT bonds to be traded in Europe exchange

THE CONSORTIUM that built the Metro Rail Transit project plans to list up to $178 million worth of bonds at the Luxembourg Stock Exchange early next year.

Fil-Estate Corp. president Sabin Aboitiz Lopa said the bonds, which have already been issued locally, will partially fund phase II of the MRT 3 project.—A 5-hit Gutted opinion that will add three new stations to the North Triangle station in Quezon City to Monumento.

Phase II is expected to run nearly 6.846 million.

Subregalia also said the consortium is ready to negotiate with the government the final terms for Phase II of the project.

"We decided to wait after elections before we negotiate Phase II," Aboitiz said. "Hopefully we can resolve talks with government. We are optimistic because the ridership for the commuter level of 400,000 a day. We need to add some as we need Phase II."

The consortium—consisting of Ayala, Philippine Buildings Corp. and Fil-Estate Corp., among others—has secured an approval from the Investment Coordination Committee of the National Economic and Development Authority, Elizabeth S.L. Sanchez

DISCLOSURES

ELECTED directors of **DBM Corp.** were Jose Concepcion Jr., Jose Mc. Concepcion III, John Wayne Concepcion III, Bernardo Fernandez, Hercules Macleo Jr., Ma. Victoria Concepcion, Ma. Lisa Santiago, Joseph Steve Jr., Ms. Victoria Ana Bautista, Fatima Reclamos Perales, Ramon Bonoan and Eleuterio Cornel.

* * *

ELECTED directors of **Adaro Prime Resources Inc.** were Ferdinand Domingo, Rodigo Gonzalez, Celso Medina, Peter Francis Zagala, Marlene Carlyle, Yolanda Ocena, Rommel Santiago, Joel Ramirez, Rolando Galvez, Rodrigo Cabrera and Jovan Pabito.

* * *

ELECTED directors of **Leisure & Resorts World Corp.** were Roberto Ancheta, Alfredo Benjamin Benitez, Jose Concado Benitez, Estanislao Barcelo Jr., Raul Zamudian, Anthony Linsangan, Geoffrey Uymatiao, Maria Fatima Moreno Gumtapura, Reynaldo Ramirez, Leopoldo Campos and Bienvenido Santiago.

* * *

ELECTED directors of **A. Brown Co. Inc.** were Walter Brown, Victor Jose, Annabelle Brown, Rolandino Pharis, Guido Alfredo Delgado, Jose Ma. Francisco and Elpidio Perez.

* * *

ELECTED directors of **Solid Group Inc.** were Dona Lim, Joseph Lim, Susan Tan, David Lim, Jason Lim, Vincent Lim, Geroge Tan, Edgardo Tordesillas and Vicente Ona. Compiled by Marian O. Tabuso, PDS Research

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Lopez-owned power firm acquires Clark utility

ANGELES

(LANGUAGE SCHOOL) SCHOOL—The state-owned Clark Development Corp. (CDC) has sold its shares in Clark Electric Distribution Corp. (CEDC) to Manila Industrial Engineering Services Corp. (Mesco).

CEDC is the exclusive power distributor to more than 400 companies in the economic...

CDC president Jim [illegible] Angeles said the sale of CDC's 20-percent stake to its joint venture partner would help its... prove the power supply and services inside the [illegible] Clark-related economic zone, considered the biggest in the country.

"The divestment of the CDC share in CEDC and the sale of CEDC shares to MEC paves the way for a unified distribution system in the zone," Angeles said.

Mesco, a subsidiary of the Lopez-owned Manila Electric Corp. (Meralco), entered into a joint venture with CDC in 1997, six years after American troops pulled out from Clark.

Angeles said Mesco has also agreed to sign an agreement with the Angeles Electric Corp. to wheel distribution power distribution services to Clark.

He said the CDC would focus on its obligation to regulate the various utilities inside the zone.

The CDC he added, required the new CEDC to... a service standard and systems development agreement.

The details the service performance levels and the infrastructure required for CEDC to efficiently distribute power to Clark.

"Better service standards are more stringent than what are required under the Philippine Distribution Code," Angeles said.

He also said that CDC demanded for "reliable and efficient power at competitive rates, with efficiency savings to be passed on to the CDC locators. — Rowelle Rivera, *PIA Central Luzon Desk*

Piltel raises capital to P13B, prepares for Smart buyout

By Clarissa L. Batino

NAZARENO

PANGILINAN

PILIPINO Telephone Corp., operator of the Talk N' Text mobile phones, has raised its authorized capital to P13.6 billion, paving the way for its acquisition by rival Smart Communications Inc.

The Piltel board of directors approved the increase in authorized capital from P5.5 billion during its June 26 meeting.

The board called for a special stockholders' meeting on Sept. 3 to ask shareholders to ratify its decision.

Piltel said in a disclosure to the Philippine Stock Exchange Inc. it raised its authorized capital in order to have enough shares to cover the conversion of Smart's preferred shares.

Smart was expected to soon convert its preferred shares into common shares to complete its acquisition of 62 percent of Piltel from Philippine Long Distance Telephone Co.

Smart is on the final stretch of it... making a deal to acquire 49 percent of Piltel's P20.5 billion in debt from the latter's creditor banks.

Once the debt swap is completed, Smart would end up with 82 percent of Piltel's shares.

"The debt exchange would improve the results of the entire group because it would allow Smart to gain access to the revenue of Piltel's Talk N' Text in a more complete way," PLDT and Smart president Napoleon Nazareno said earlier.

The PLDT board approved early this year Smart's plan to acquire debt and equity of PLDT in Piltel over it a bid to secure the approval of 75 percent of Piltel's creditors.

"Considering Piltel's operational return to health, these two transactions will enhance PLDT's profit and cash flow starting the year," PLDT and Smart chair Manuel Pangilinan said earlier.

Stocks

Continued on B2

1,000-point mark.

Mr Abrero started his... day on Wednesday after falling... Tuesday when it on May 20, with the opposition alleging his election was aimed to... him the new Senate... de Pur Jr.

Del Castillo said the rise in US policy rates already had been factored in to... share prices.

The peso-to-... eased to 50.80/$1.00 per dollar from 50.11 on Wednesday after the Fed... Reuters

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Business Features Editor Margie Quiniquin-Kaplan

Globalize your brand by knowing Asian shoppers

By Karen K. de Asis
Contributor

THE SELF-SERVICE grocery trade continues to rise in importance with 44 percent of fast-moving consumer good sales traced to this retail format.

WITH globalization has become a major driver for many local brands including those in the FMCG (fast-moving consumer goods) category, the term liberalization provides huge opportunities for the really marketed Filipino brands.

While brand value is key to the success of a global brand, understanding shopper and retail trends is critical. Illustrated by global competitors, Lowe&Partners Marketing Corp.'s Judy Amado is making headway in China and Vietnam. Also, Megaworld Corp.'s Filipino brands are making inroads to South and South Asia, among others.

Recently, AcNielsen Philippines embarked on industry-specific Concerto Shopper Trends for "The Asia Pacific." The study, completed in 2003, tracked over 300 FMCG categories in countries like Australia and New Zealand (Oceania); Japan, Hong Kong, Korea, Taiwan, China; North Asia); Singapore, Malaysia, Philippines, Singapore, Thailand, Vietnam (Southeast Asia); India and Sri Lanka (South Asia).

Among the grocery categories studied were packaged foods, consumable products, household, toiletries, dairy and frozen products.

The report states:

The continued growth of the self-service grocery trade across the Asia-Pacific region, the self-service grocery trade continues to rise in importance with 44 percent of FMCG sales traced to this retail format.

The rise of multiple store formats. Like most regions around the world, there is the emerging presence of multiple store formats in the Asia Pacific led by hypermarkets, convenience stores and personal care stores. The last three are shaped largely by massive entrepreneur and changing consumer needs. Other store formats include traditional grocery stores or small stores that include variety/mini stores; supermarkets; supermarkets and warehouse clubs; general merchandise stores; independent and chain drugstores.

Convenience stores, because of proximity to shoppers and brand recall, is expected to remain firmly in place for a long time to most consumer needs. Overall, convenience stores gained share in most countries as the number of stores across the region increased by 15 percent to over 80,000 stores. Convenience store leaders include 7-11, Circle K, Mini-stop, Cold-e Star Mart, Shell Select, 81, 1BIC Star Personal Store, AM, PM.

Japan leads with over 40,000 convenience stores. On the other hand, Taiwan, which led the hypermarket evolution in Asia, improved a slide in hypermarket sales in 2003 while showing a remarkable increase in personal care, store selling improved terms and convenience store openings. Taiwan has 7,300 convenience stores or one store for every 3,000 people. Taiwanese shoppers are also the most frequent users of convenience stores with an average household shopping trip a store every two to three days.

In the Philippines, the traditional grocery or sari-sari store that carries only around 60 key items continues to be the most dynamic store format with growth in an otherwise low footprint economy. This was largely due to the expansion of small pack sizes and outlets.

Emerging retail market in China, Thailand, Malaysia and Russia. China is reportedly the fastest growing self-service retail market in the region with the number of modern trade outlets increasing by 40 percent and convenience stores numbering over 12,000.

Thailand comes second to China. Due to a positive growth in economy, there is a surge in demand for high-end retail formats and categories like beer, whisky, snacks and energy drinks. Those categories grew by over 10 percent and store expansion in both traditional and modern convenience stores likewise. Super markets continue to thrive in Thailand with nearly 84 percent of urban Thai shoppers using this as their main store for purchasing groceries.

In Malaysia and Korea, hypermarkets and large format stores are booming the most store format for at least 40 percent of urban grocery shoppers. Nevertheless, while there is high acceptance for hypermarkets in Malaysia, its growth is threatened by legislation with the government announcing plans for new zoning regulations that restrict store openings.

Hypermarket brands across the region include Tesco, Big C, Carrefour, Giant, Hypermart, Tesco, Lotus format stores or warehouse clubs include Costco, Makro.

Concentrated and emerging retail markets. Australia, New Zealand, Hong Kong and Singapore are largely concentrated markets with a few retailers dominating the scene. Do the other hand, Sri Lanka and India are emerging markets with the most un-retail service trade just entering the modern trade phase.

Main shopper versus key influencer by gender category. In the Asia-Pacific region, women remain to be the main shopper for household goods. Notable exceptions is the high influence of men when it comes to food and grocery basket content in countries like Australia, New Zealand, Hong Kong, China, Singapore, Malaysia, Indonesia and Sri Lanka.

Propensity to try new products. While there is general conservatism in trying out new things among Asian shoppers, there is a higher degree of propensity to try brand-new products among shoppers in Vietnam and India. On the average, most Asian shoppers try to keep up with information on new products or brands but they do not go out of their way to try these new products. Hence, marketers should concentrate investments out of their buying inertia.

The promotional versus brand loyal shopper. In the Asia Pacific, there are up to 38 percent of shoppers belonging to the promotional shopper behavior profile. These shoppers are not brand loyal, are more likely to shop around for special offers and read and respond to store brochures. The promotional shoppers are open to new ideas and willing to try private labels, also known as house or store brands. Australia and New Zealand lead in private label consumption with over 50 percent of shoppers purchasing regularly brands.

On the other hand, while 40 percent of shoppers in most Asian countries are aware of private label brands there are only three countries in the Asia Pacific region—Australia, Singapore and Thailand where half of urban shoppers buy any private label to a stretch. Private labels remain an opportunity for the Asian retail trade and seems to have room to grow. The implications from this window provided then have how to effectively entertain shoppers.

(The writer is chief learning officer of Marketing Knowledge Institute and Synovate Philippines. Feedback at kdasis@mktinst.net.)

Advance VAT on sugar, and wheat flour—I

By Ma. Victoria A. Villaluz
and Ma. Cristina T. Sarabia
SGV & Co.

IRONICALLY, one of the major goods and services, the value-added tax (VAT) on these are paid at the time of the sale.

Unlike most other goods, the main ingredients to our favorite cake, refined sugar and flour from imported wheat, are subject to the payment of advance VAT.

Revenue Regulations No. 7-98, as amended, provides for the procedure for the advance payments of the VAT on the sale of refined sugar (RS) and flour (RF), thru BIR Revenue Memorandum Circular (RMC) No. 29-2003 to provide for the procedures for the advance payment of VAT on the sale of flour milled from imported wheat. The imposition of advance VAT payment is aimed at leveling the playing field in the refined sugar industry to encourage proper declaration and payment of taxes.

Refined sugar refers to sugar whose content by sucrose weight, in the dry state, corresponds to a polarimeter reading of 99.5° and above. Cane sugar is presumed to be refined sugar if it is produced by a refinery; except a sugar refinery or a premanufacturer of sugar mill operation by the BIR to be producing and/or capable of producing sugar with polarimeter reading of 99.5° and by which content based therefore and verified by the Sugar Regulatory Administration identifies the same to be of a polarimeter reading of 99.5° and above. Sugar produced from production lines accredited by the BIR to be capable of producing sugar with polarimeter reading of 99.5° or above are considered refined sugar.

Payers of the advance VAT

The requirement to pay advance VAT on the sale or refined sugar is imposed on the owner or seller. The VAT should be paid before any refined sugar can be withdrawn from a sugar refinery or mill. In case the owner of the refined sugar is a duly-accredited and registered agricultural cooperative of good standing, the cooperative or buyer should be required to pay the advance VAT on the sale of the refined sugar to a third party prior to the transfer of ownership or any document evidencing ownership are endorsed and/or transferred by the cooperative to its members.

In the case of flour milled from imported wheat, the advance VAT should be paid by the flour miller. The point of payment of the advance VAT on the sale of wheat flour is done at the time of the importation of the wheat by the flour miller.

The VAT should be paid prior to the release of the wheat from the custody of the Bureau of Customs. If the flour miller purchases the wheat from traders, the advance VAT should be paid by the flour miller prior to delivery of the wheat.

Basis for the computation

The amount of the advance VAT should be determined by applying the VAT rate of 10 percent on the tax base.

The tax base for refined sugar is 3955 per 50-kilogram bag of refined sugar produced by a sugar refinery and P762 per 50-kilogram bag of refined sugar produced by a sugar mill.

The tax base for wheat imported by flour miller is a 75 percent of the sum of:

(a) the invoice value multiplied by the currency exchange rate as the date of payment; (b) customs duties and other charges prior to the release of the imported wheat from customs custody except for the advance VAT; and (c) 15 percent mark-up on the sum of (a) and (b).

For wheat purchased from traders, the tax base shall be 75 percent of the sum of: (a) invoice value; (b) estimated freight expenses; and, (c) 5 percent on the sum of (a) and (b).

Time and manner of payment of the Advance VAT. The advance payment of VAT on refined sugar should be made to any authorized agent bank (AAB) or revenue collection officer or deputized city or municipal treasurer of the revenue district office (RDO). In places where there are no authorized agent banks, having jurisdiction over the physical location of the sugar mill or refinery before the withdrawal of refined sugar from the refinery. However, if the refinery or the sugar mill is within cities under the jurisdiction of the large taxpayers service (LTS) or large taxpayers district office (LTDO), the payment should also be made to an authorized agent bank to ensure proper recording of the payment.

For wheat, the flour miller should comply the advance VAT payable and pay the amount due to the LTS/ LTDO/ RDO where the flour miller is registered. Through the agent bank. The flour miller should present a copy of the duly validated payment form to the BOC having jurisdiction over the port of entry. The BOC having jurisdiction over the port of entry should issue the authority to release imported Goods (ATRIG) covering the importation of flour in accordance with the provisions of Revenue Order No. 35-2002, which prescribes the guidelines for the issuance of ATRIG for excise tax and VAT purposes. However, should the wheat be imported by a trader, the trader is required to pay the advance VAT. The advance VAT on wheat for those imported by the trader shall be due prior to delivery of the same to the flour miller.

To monitor the importation of wheat, the importer, whether miller or trader, is required to secure the ATRIG from the BOC. The Bureau of Customs requires the ATRIG before releasing the imported wheat in its custody. The importation of wheat should be treated as an exception to the list of importers enclosed to Revenue Memorandum Circular No. 1-2002. (To be continued)

How brand positioning evolves

MARKETING Rx
Dr. Ned Roberto
& Andy Roberto

THIS is a continuation of last Friday's column. It's addressing the second of the three branding items. This second issue is about the question: "How should you evolve your brand positioning over time?"

For this issue we'll use the model of Professors Gregory Carpenter, a marketing professor at the senior Allen's alma mater, the Kellogg Management School at Northwestern University. We like this model since it is incentive and explain his brand positioning evolution model.

Volvo's positioning strategy

Although it has been in the Swedish automobile market since the 1930s, Volvo was a latecomer in the aggressive selling of its brand in the car market. It was only in 1958 that it decided to be an active participant in the market. But its approach to entry was totally different with its Volvo 140 series that began in 1966.

As an aggressive latecomer, Volvo thought that the most effective market entry strategy was to search for a market-niche. Its marketers understood, as economists say, that a latecomer's best option is to avoid competition. Instead, it should find a segment that is underserved or dissatisfied by competitors' offerings. Such segments are called blue oceans, literally pertaining to the physical location of the vessel still at sea—away before the established or refined sugar from the refinery. However, if the refinery or the sugar mill is within cities under the jurisdiction of the large taxpayers service (LTS) or large taxpayers district office (LTDO), the payment should also be made to an authorized agent bank to ensure proper recording of the payment.

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Of course, the implementation is next but this evolved brand positioning was hone or deliver on it. There was obviously a significant positioning transition. Does the latter have total commitment to a consistent image or self-image position? Definitely not. The latter has to improve the product engineering's responsibility. Whose responsibility was it to deliver on an image positioning?

The marketing rose to the occasion. This was the superstar of the ad agency and it delivered. The final approved and aired ad showed a young wife planning her husband and in forming him that the result of her pregnancy test was positive. And so, as mentioned, she decided to buy a Volvo.

Once more, this evolved brand positioning served sales for another good many years. Again, when sales showed signs of slowing down, management decided to evolve its brand again. It thought that it made logical marketing sense to go after the segment of children of the baby boomer parents who were now young adults. They were the broader Generation X segment.

The Volvo 850R series was to marshal a study this segment and their car buying values. Data analysts showed that this segment's priority car value was indeed something else. It was the need for a unique car driving experience.

Soul saver

With the help of its ad agency, Volvo translated this priority value into a new unique emotional positioning that said that Volvo is the experiential car that will "save your soul."

Called upon to translate the brand positioning into an appropriate car specs and features, engineering came up with a new Volvo driven by one of the classic Volvo "look" were softened. Engineering were designed a Volvo convertible, the S60, whose design was based on associations with racing. As a way of measuring against this exciting, unexpected Volvo entered the S60 in a car race—the Kinrbergring 24 Hour Race—and won!

Notice that once the trigger is evolving the brand positioning is different. If the brand positioning is always PEM (primary target market) segment has reached its sales growth limits, then evolve to another brand positioning that has two qualifications.

First, it's positioning that distinctively satisfies the market segment's priority product value. This is actually equivalent to two requirements. First, you have to know the target market's priority product value and second, you need to be able to address that priority in a distinctive way.

The essential qualification says that your evolved brand positioning should not be contradicting or a compatible with the previous positioning. In the very least, it should complement. Ideally, it should cyncrgize.

Slowing down of sales

Setting aside for the moment re-situating the source of this sales growth, lets to the other elements in the marketing mix. let's focus on what can happen to the product's consumers' behavior and response to the brand positioning. Start with the functional positioning.

The reason functional positioning works is in the company's improvement of its product performance. That can be in the product's delivered superior performance or superior economy. So once the basis for this superiority can no longer be sustained in the eyes of the target market, sales will be adversely affected.

In the case of an image brand positioning for the positioning of the brand on the target consumer's self image the problem comes when a new generation of consumers changes their self-image values. That is what happened to the segment of baby boomer parents who bought Volvo as their statement that they were "saving parents."

But that evolved brand positioning, the sustainability problem is precisely in the "strength" of that positioning—a unique, engaging experience. How can you prevent consumer satiation and/or the emergence of your product's power to deliver that unique, engaging experience? Where the senior Allen's son, Jason at AIM was confronting the Disney execs, they asked, "How many times do you really want to repeat that visit to Disney?"

It is Starbucks that has probably found the answer. Positioning itself as the "escape from daily routine and drama" worked in favor of sustainability. That's a unique, engaging experience you never repeatedly, regularly. Well, drink to that! Hmmm, make that a "tall" glass!

Feedback at MarketingRx@NationalLightSource.com. Or text to 0919.784.5432. See Al Ries, Brand Marketing Summit Philippines 2004 Conference on Aug. 16-17 in Singapore. Visit www.GlobalBrandMarketing.com for details.

TAN YAN KEE FOUNDATION

Taipan dips into deep pockets to give back to community

By Doris C. Dorias

FROM his early days as a struggling watchmaker's apprentice at the Batangas Cigar and Cigarette Company, Lucio Tan knew that education is the key to escape from the clutches of poverty.

Now, the taipan—who has interests in tobacco, banking, airline, beverage and retailing—is giving back to the community by funding projects in support of economic, cultural and sports, health and social welfare, research and manpower development.

The Tan Yan Kee Foundation Inc., a the main philanthropic arm of the Lucio Tan Group of Companies, was established in 1986 and named after the taipan's father.

"In his many travels abroad, Dr. Tan observed the widening gap between industrialized and developing nations, not only in material wealth but more so in the field of education," said Emilio Domingo, Tan Yan Kee Foundation executive director. The task now, in particular, of the alarming decline in the standards of education in the Philippines, which is Asian neighbors.

"Coupled with his strong belief that education is the ultimate liberator, Dr. Tan considered no detour time, energy and resources to ... help improve the quality of Philippine education."

Domingo chairs the University of the East, which Tan bailed out in the 1980s.

The Tan Yan Kee Foundation is the principal partner of the Foundation for Upgrading the Standard of Education (FUSE), a non-profit organization which Tan also co-founded. Its main concern is to help upgrade the quality of education in the Philippines by improving the teaching skills of English, Science and Mathematics teachers.

Every year since its founding in 1994, FUSE conducts regular training workshops for teachers of English, Elementary Science, chemistry and Physics. FUSE is also into the reproduction and distribution of educational videotapes and support materials for teachers using the Continuing Studies via Technology (Costech) project. To date, over 30,000 tapes have been distributed to over 1,500 schools nationwide.

"With government in a serious fiscal bind, the Lucio Tan Group of Companies is always on the lookout for opportunities to offer a helping hand," Domingo said.

The foundation is also supporting various educational programs, such as the "Books for the Barrios," and the literary Club of Elementary Teachers "Talino ng Kabataan."

Last year, a total of 670 boxes of books and other educational paraphernalia from the United States arrived at the port of Manila. These educational materials were donated by businessman Lucio Tan and delivered by the Tan Yan Kee Foundation through a $7,000 grant.

Another key project is the construction of 2,830 classrooms throughout the country to the last two decades.

Domingo said the foundation is continuing to explore innovative approaches in helping improve the quality of education in the Philippines.

"Looking forward, Dr. Tan has committed to set up a special fund to help talented science teachers and professors in pursuing masters or doctorate degrees both in the Philippines and abroad," Domingo said. "His only condition is for these teachers to come back to the Philippines to share their knowledge with fellow educators."

TOP HONCHOS. Tan Foundation officials (front), upon a newly built schoolhouse, one of thousands put up across the country by the Tan Yan Kee Foundation.

CORPORATE CITIZEN

GSIS, SSS refuse to be under IC control

By Michelle V. Rama

THE SOCIAL Security System (SSS) and Government Service Insurance System (GSIS) are opposing the move that would extend the regulatory powers of the Insurance Commission over the two biggest pension funds in the country.

A draft administrative order giving more power to the Insurance Commission to evaluate activities of the pension funds is expected to be signed soon by President Macapagal-Arroyo. Once signed, the administrative order will allow the Insurance Commission to evaluate even the investment activities of the SSS and the GSIS.

Currently, the Insurance Commission's supervisory function over the pension funds is limited to the assessment of their financial conditions.

SSS and GSIS officials were separate letters to the Department of Finance, arguing the legality of the administrative order. They said that the order is against their charters, which defined the function of the Insurance Commission so to be confined to the examination of their financial condition and the methods they observe in providing insurance service to the public.

"Administrative regulations cannot extend the law and amend a legislative enactment," an SSS official said in the letter. "Administrative regulations must be in harmony with the provisions of the law."

The SSS official cited a provision of the Social Securities Law, where it is written that the insurance Commission's examination "shall be limited to the functions operation of the SSS ... and shall not embrace the other operations of the SSS."

Likewise, the SSS said that there is no need to extend the current power of the Insurance Commission. One official explained that the Insurance Commission's supervisory power over the GSIS is limited only to the assessment of its insurance function and financial condition, since the Department of Finance is already in charge overseeing the other activities of GSIS, like investments decisions.

The move to extend the power of the Insurance Commission is meant to promote transparency in the investment decisions of the pension funds and protect their members' interest.

The GSIS earlier elicited protests from its members for failing to service loan applications on time. While GSIS said the problem was due to technical problems in its database, some members blamed to weak financial management and poor investments decisions.

TransCo
National Transmission Corporation
INVITATION TO APPLY FOR ELIGIBILITY AND TO BID
ADSO: (00447)

PB Ref No.: (ADSO-00447)

1. The NATIONAL TRANSMISSION CORPORATION (Transco) (BOS AND AHEMDO COMMITTEE) (BAC) FOR HEAD OFFICE, invites bids/pre-bid/invitations to apply for eligibility with us:
   a. Duly licensed Philippine citizens or partnerships, or
   b. Partnerships duly organized under the laws of the Philippines and of which at least sixty-five percent (65%) of the interest belongs to citizens of the Philippines, or
   c. Corporations duly organized under the laws of the Philippines, and of which at least sixty-five percent (65%) of the outstanding capital stock belongs to citizens of the Philippines; or
   d. Cooperatives duly registered with the cooperatives Development Authority (CDA).

The aforementioned participation should have the following valid and current Licenses and Registration Particulars issued by PCAB:

License : (if Multi "CONSORTIA")
Registration : (if Joint "SMALL B")

2. Contract : CONTRACT FOR THE SUPPLY AND DELIVERY OF LABOR AND MATERIALS FOR THE CONSTRUCTION OF TRANSMISSION TOWER BASE

3. The contract to be performed for the aforesaid project shall be specified in the Technical Quotation Form of the Bid Documents that would be issued.
   The approved Budget for the Contract (ABC) is for One (1) P1,257,922.00 from the Internal Cash Generation of TransCo.

4. Application for Eligibility and Eligibility Forms will be available for issuance starting July 5, 2004 to July 15, 2004 at the BAC Secretariat, National Transmission Corporation, Quezon City, 3/F Main Building, Quezon Avenue cor. BIR Road, Diliman, Quezon City, upon presentation of original PCAB License and a payment of non-refundable fee of Two Hundred Pesos (P200.00) per copy.

5. Deadline for submission of Sworn duly accomplished Application for Eligibility, eligibility forms, documents and statements shall be on or before 12:00 NN of July 15, 2004 and shall be submitted at the registration office and address mentioned above. If the said date is a non-working day, it declared non-working day, the deadline for submission shall be moved to the next working day immediately following said date. Eligible bidders shall be notified on or before July 23, 2004.

6. A complete set of bidding documents may be purchased by eligible bidders from July 23, 2004 to August 9, 2004 upon payment of non-refundable fee of Three Thousand Pesos (P3000.00).

7. Invited Contractors for the submission of Technical and Price Proposals will be held on July 26, 2004, 10:00 A.M. at National Transmission Corporation, Board Conference Room, 2/F, Main Building, Quezon Avenue cor. BIR Road, Diliman, Quezon City.

8. Submission of Technical and Price Proposals of eligible bidders shall be on 12:00 A.M. on August 16, 2004 at the BAC Secretariat, Transco Corporation, Board Conference Room, 2/F, Main Building, Quezon Avenue cor. BIR Road, Diliman, Quezon City. The technical and price proposals will be opened immediately in the presence of Bidder's representative who chooses to attend.

9. All particulars relative to the eligibility, bidding, evaluation of bids and award of contract shall be governed by the Implementing Rules and Regulations of R.A. 9184 (Otherwise known as the "Government Procurement Act).

10. Transco reserves the right to reject any application for eligibility or all bids without offering any reasons. waive any required formality thereof, and to reject or award to the bidder whose proposal is most advantageous to the government.

11. Additional information shall be furnished upon request. All communications should be addressed to the undersigned at the aforementioned address.

(Sgd.) ANTONIO G. LABAYEN
Chairman
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TRENDS

LIFESTYLE

These are a few of my favorite things

THIS is the body issue and I will answer readers' requests for my favorite beauty treats. Brands/services I will mention are those I have read-tested recently and over the years and which I am sure work.

Weight control: I found the ultimate carbohydrate neutralizer at Health Express Glorietta 3. Trim Down Phase 2/Carb control, when taken before a heavy carb meal, prevents the body's absorption of carbohydrates so you can stick to your 40/40/20 diet and stay slim. I lost seven pounds after a month. Forty tablets cost P1,480. The Apple Cider Vinegar tablets suppress the appetite, prevent bloating and help metabolize sugar and carbs.

Body scrubs: I go to Belmond for body scrub (P5,500), paying an additional P800 for khadi, as in Zadine Potter for body scrub and whitening seaweed mask to slough off dead skin and even out my body's skin tone. I get the best results from oil-based scrubs that can be applied on dry skin then washed off, lifting grime and dead skin.

When I feel like doing the scrubbing at home, my favorites are Dalvinne Tropical sugar cane salt scrub (closest to Belmond texture, P620) and Clarins Toning Body Polishers. More like Peter's Body Shop's Grapeseed and Origins Incredible Spreadable Ginger.

Exfoliating soaps: The best exfoliating soap I've tried is VMV's oil powder soap (P1,500). Removes oil plugs and dead skin from shoulders, legs, buttocks and back.

Exfoliating body lotions: For eliminating dry scaly skin and preventing ingrown hairs from shaving and waxing by keeping pores unblocked. Murad Intensive Body smoothing treatment, Neostrata 15 AHA lotion plus for face and body, VMV 10 salicylic acid lotion for face and body.

Budget products: Anyone skin smoothing lotion with AHA and BHA.

Whitter bodies: Clarins White Plus Body Mist has a slight tint that makes skin lighter and whitening ingredients that really lighten the complexion while acting like a foundation. Grapeseed Body Butter from Body Shop has a pale green color that, when applied, makes my skin look instantly but naturally whiter.

Cellulite and spot slimmers: These really make my jeans slide on and zip up without effort. Skin contracts and cellulite decreases by at least 75 percent in my hips, arms, abs, butt and thighs. Avon Cellusculpt (P420), Shiseido Body Creator gel (P1,600), Clarins Anti Eau (P1,550) oil for water retention and LRI Minceur for cellulite. Physiomer Body de Gra-nutrition gets rid of stubborn fat.

Firming: I noticed that firming creams do not really decrease size but make us seem less flabby and tighter. This translates (back flavor) where skin have sagged. I use them for my breasts and cleavage. My fave: Clarins extra firming body cream. But budget find: Guilfra's face and neck firming cream (P270) works just as great.

Bikini wax: I go Brazilian, and my favorite painless waxers are: Arleen of Salon Privé Makati, P1,800 for Brazilian and P800 for regular; Quiche of Waxercisers, Ayala Triangle (P600); and Susie of Emphasis Rockwell Makati (P800).

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E-mail the author at kitsysalar@yahoo.com

What you need to know about watches

ARCEAU

KELLY Clochette

TO DETERMINE what watch style will suit you best, take your occupation and daily activities into consideration. A simple tank watch, for instance, is practical and can take you anywhere. Meanwhile, a combination of steel and gold or white and yellow gold is more versatile and can be worn with anything in your wardrobe. Plus, it can complement different pieces of jewelry.

If you are investing in a timepiece for the first time ever, it is advisable to choose a basic style that you can wear for most occasions and with different outfits. A Cartier tank watch or a Rolex Oyster combination steel and gold are a couple of classics that will stand the test of time.

But of course, you also have to take budget into account. If you cannot yet afford to splurge on a branded timepiece, something similar to the above-mentioned will suffice.

A classic watch with leather straps is another stylish option. Several colored straps are men's prized outfits! It's also exciting to capture a bit of your personality by choosing bright, colored straps. You may opt for caramel, buttalo, gray and pig in orange or red, for example.

APPLES' PICKINGS

Applez Alberto-Sadhwani

You may also choose more exotic skins like crocodile, alligator, lizard, ostrich or shark.

Certain watch manufacturers like Hermès source their skins from around the world. They make certain that these skins are farmed and do not come from endangered species. So at least, you do your part in preserving the environment while acquiring a watch that suits your taste.

Some stylish men and women opt to wear more affordable timepieces from companies like Swatch, Fossil or some other standard but still fashionable brand.

Swatch, for example, offers Swiss-made watches that are of good quality. Plus, they have a wide selection of styles from the basic to the whimsical. Again, it is all a matter of personal preference and financial capability.

PAPRIKA

CLIPPER Diver watch

CAPE Cod Double Run

Building a collection

Once you've invested in your basic timepiece, you can start building a collection of watches that you can wear for different occasions and activities.

Sports enthusiasts can invest in a sports watch, depending on their sports of choice. Companies like Rolex, Breitling or Tag Heuer, for instance, are known for their dive watches. A more simple Nike watch with a timer is perfect for runners. Or how about a Timex Ironman, a sports watch that was named after the Hawaiian endurance event that includes biking, swimming and running?

Fashionistas, on the other hand, can develop a stylish collection from the branded (like Cartier Divan or Hermès Kelly Double Tour, to name a couple) to the generic (a branded timepiece from the Greenhills strap).

Meanwhile, adventurers with a budget can invest in limited-edition styles such as the Bvlgari Bbulla watch or a much coveted French Moller timepiece.

It's also advantageous to invest in a more formal watch. Although, I don't normally encourage women to wear watches with their evening attire, unless the timepiece is bejeweled and bracelet or cuff-like. But men can always don leather-strapped tank styles with their formal suits and tuxedos.

Quartz versus automatic

Quartz watches are battery-operated while automatic timepieces are self-winding and run by micro-mechanical components.

A quartz watch battery should last approximately four to three years before requiring replacement. In the case of Hermès watches, the date when the battery was first installed is engraved on the back.

An automatic watch, on the other hand, should be serviced by a certified repair center every six years so as to ensure the proper lubrication of the components.

You can also have your watches buffed and polished, as needed. And it will help to store them in watch boxes that have several compartments for various timepieces.

Some serious watch collectors even invest in small containers that have rotating holders so that automatic watches are constantly moving even when not in use.

Meanwhile, the manager of Locorre, a popular watch store that carries brands like Frank Philippe, IWC and Jaeger, says you can take better care of watches with leather straps by not wearing them every day.

It's best to change watches every two days as the leather can become moist therefore, last longer.

When storing, don't keep leather in airtight compartments that will make it brittle. Neither should you expose it to direct heat.

Much to the chagrin of one long-dead Victorian ancestor, watch enthusiasts can now wear their timepieces in their hearts content and for any purpose—be it to write down fashion statement or simply to tell time.

E-mail the author at speakle@hotmail.com

This year's 15 best-dressed women

JUST what does it take to be a style icon?

Find out as Preview, the country's style bible, presents this year's 15 best dressed Women in a special collector's edition issue.

The 15 style-setters will reveal their thoughts on fashion and personal style and let you in on what kind of clothes they love to wear, what accessories are the perfect match and how to live lives of excellent fashion flair.

To celebrate this year's issue of style, Preview will hold an exhibit featuring the 15 Best Dressed from July 2 to July 10 at the Rotunda 2 Lobby, Makati.

The society-by-invitation celebration on the opening night on July 3 will showcase at Manu where this year's issue of style will receive gift packs from Mo Universe.

Be one of the first to find out who made it to the prestigious list and see for yourselves why these fashion mavens are Preview's chosen ones.

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FRIDAY,
JULY 2, 2004

PHILIPPINE DAILY INQUIRER

LIFESTYLE

Budji wins a following in Bangkok

Filipino designer does the country pr at a time when we most need it

I'VE always wondered what it'd be like to wake up in a Budji Layug house—with its clean lines, panoramic windows that let the outdoors in, and fine furniture. A month or so ago, I did just that, and in Bangkok at that.

The early morning feeling was exactly what I imagined it would be. The moment you stepped out of the bedroom, at the top of the stairs, you took in the view of a bamboo-dotted garden framed by a giant window at the stairwell. The stairs had no cumbersome balustrade, just the straight line of a metal railing that seemed to float along the steps. There's nothing like a clean design to give one a clean mind in the morning.

The early morning sun flowed unimpeded into the living and dining rooms downstairs. It was like waking up in a garden with invisible walls. A few steps and you were out in the lanai wrapped around the front of the house. Actually it was a perfect showcasing Philippine-made furniture. On the side of the house was a pond.

This spread is Budji Living, Budji's home design showroom in Bangkok which is drawing for this foremost Filipino designer a growing clientele and, more important, building him a name in Thailand, if not in the region. Budji is selling fine in Thailand, his showroom and designs regularly featured in the press, including Thailand's Elle Decor.

He's the first Filipino home and furniture designer to make a bid for the world market by opening a showroom and a design studio abroad. His furniture is in showrooms in Madrid, Sydney, the US, and starting this month, Kuala

LIFE-STYLED

Thelma Sioson San Juan

Lumpur. One should remember that in the early '80s Budji became the first Filipino designer whose furniture was carried by Bloomingdale's. This was his famous bamboo line.

In Thailand, he went beyond having a showroom. With Thai partner Opal Sawangjit, he opened a design firm that now has a growing list of projects, including a condominium and a resort in Malaysia. Budji Living is actually a house and a showroom where Budji stays when he's in Bangkok. Located in an upscale residential neighborhood in Thonglor, Sukhumvit, it is a house that functions like a showroom, or vice versa.

Budji (2)

LAHAM of BudjiLiving in Bangkok has the furniture of Homeware Designers.

SHOWHOOH glows softly in the evening from its giant jars in the garden

Budji wins a following in Bangkok

From page C3

Passion for design

All these years, (I) been Budji's vision to evolve and project an "Asian design." Typically Budji, he from Bangkok to locate this Asian design in the world, because he fell in love with the place. He's an artist in the sense...every move count: eating, from a pardon.

"I wanted to be exposed to it, to try living here," Budji said, referring to Bangkok as the crossroads of Asian.

"Bangkok is familiar in that in so many ways it's like us but only more cosmopolitan. This place is really getting there," he said.

Ditchow swinging and cosmopolitan is this city that never sleeps? There's a traffic bottleneck at 2 a.m., as building ran have not one but three scores of clubs from, and each one manages to be overflowing each night. Mystique, the newest hip bar, was restless packed, three stories of it, on a weekday.)

Budji doesn't live in Bangkok, but goes there regularly, I suspect, not so much to do business as to be by himself and paint.

"I don't want to pressure myself anymore; I just want to express myself," he told me. Budji is also a very good painter.

People would give an arm and a leg to have his portraits, but again, typically Budji, he paints only when he wants to, to express himself.

Budji's place in Bangkok, in certain ways, expresses the designer in the man. More than a thousand square metres, it is a lot bigger than his showroom in Makati. When he and his parties took over the place, the house was in the '50s architecture built by one of Thailand's leading architects.

Budji liked its period character so he kept the structure, but broke down some of its walls to allow floor-to-ceiling windows and to eliminate barriers. He added the front lanai which flowed into the vast garden up front, planted its mangos, bamboos and palm trees. The pavilions in front and around the house are made of loose stones, again typically Budji.

There's a pond on the side...a calming presence. The place is a harmony of clean concrete, raw nature and greenery, calming water and finely crafted furniture.

Clean, graceful

Like a signature Budji home, it is a play of clean lines and graceful angles—the logic and sense of design—as well as a variety of textures (rough stones, warm walls). In this way it is both clean and textural.

In the evening, when the lights are on, the house, seen from afar, is like a floating structure amid a tropical landscape. Its structure is a wise play of symmetry and asymmetry. It is a good calling card for Budji's Asian design.

Just what is Asian design? From the many times I've heard Budji talk about it, I guess that it's the seamless bom out of rich heritage and tradition of craftsmanship, as well as contemporary needs and sensibilities. Perhaps without being conscious of it, Budji has come to typify it—a Filipino artist with global perspectives.

Seen in his works, it is mining the wealth of Filipino resources, from the wood to the craftsmanship, for logical, sleek design. The furniture and home accents in the Bangkok showroom are prime examples. They're not by Budji alone, but from the new-famous Showroom 8 of Filipino home designers, many of them awaited winning—Bernardo Gallegospan's open-weave dining chairs, Ann Henderson's wire furniture, Milo Baird's coffee table, Ito Pamela's wall hangings, Tony Gonzalez' home accents.

Even Jeannie Goo-Bonoan's silk fabric from her Silk Cocoon are there.

The showroom's a dramatic to a good range of Thailand's affluent set and yuppie couples who have heard of and seen the distinct touch of the Filipino designer.

These days, we need the example of a Budji daring to stake us feel good as a people. And it's happening in Bangkok.

E-mail the author at lazylazen@skynet.net

AIRYNE grown up in an elaborate Georgian-inspired home, Mary Ann Mitra's new stylish-yet home dares to be Iran's essentials.

ROOMY kitchen has an elevated granite countertop. Dark wood on the cabinetry adds warmth and puts a personal touch to an otherwise "showroom" look.

FROM THE KITCHEN all the way to the living room, adjacent rooms are connected by doors, adjusting the small space to appear larger and more breathable.

Airy Continental simplicity

Mary Ann Mitra wanted a simple, low-maintenance home for her growing family, and got a cozy Mediterranean-inspired beauty

Text by Anne A. Jamisola
Photos by Benny Johnson

THE OLD bungalow on a 400-sq-m lot had to be torn down to make way for this chic, Mediterranean-style home.

RAISING three daughters in a one-story, three-bedroom bungalow hardly gave the Mitra family breathing space. And when Mon-Mon Mitra suggested he wanted a son, the idea of having one more child—an energetic boy, no less—crowding around their home chasing God-knows-what seemed simply daunting to his wife Mary Ann.

They had been married for 14 years then, and had put aside their early dreams of building the perfect home for their family. After the birth of their first child, the couple became engrossed with work and family that, before they knew it, they had three daughters to look after.

Besides, the old home, a wedding gift from her in-laws back in 1990, had grown on Mary Ann.

But when she did get pregnant a fourth time and it turned out to be a boy, she took it as a sign that the time was right to build a bigger house.

That was two years ago. Construction practically started from scratch. The old bungalow, save for a few walls, had to be torn down. From the rubble rose a charming five-bed, room, two-story Mediterranean-inspired home, with a home theater and mini office.

The easy, warm feel of the Mediterranean architecture, along with virtually everything else in the house, is the wife's choice. Mon-Mon says the old bungalow's low, galvanized iron ceiling was, despite air conditioners, for-ceaselessly hot that at the end of the day

AMTIQUE and Asian ornaments mesh effortlessly with contemporary lamps. The Antonio Luz painting was loaned by the National Artist's niece, one of SDH's interior designers, for the picture.

"Interior design is a lot like 'pag-kinukuha ang mga'."

Minimalist sensibilities

She wanted a simple, low-maintenance home, a departure from the Georgian home she grew up in, replete with chandeliers and huge jars and numerous figurines and a grandfather's clock. To implement her minimalist sensibilities, she hired a young but very capable company, SDH Interior Objekts Ltd. (632)3727777, cellular 9180092, e-mail sdhinteriors@yahoo.com).

Mary Ann admits she was so enraged with the construction that she gained about 20 pounds (the stress never to build another home again).

Having the girls from 6211 around, however, eased much of the burden off her shoulders. "They were very professional and systematic. Alam na nila kung ano ang dapat nilang gawin. Sabihin mo pag pili ng fabrics and colors at tahan na," she says.

The SDH women, interior designers Sofie Ojeda and Marisol Fidalgo, had nothing to complain either. Both say Mitra knew exactly what she wanted that, after presenting a few schemes, she made up for it.

SDH is a full-package interior design company—from concept boards to turnover, from racking to unpacking. From labeling to unveiling. From designing to sourcing, even finding the household help.

Ojeda says instead of traditional Mediterranean, which is very too rustic for the young-ish couple, SDH opted for a more contemporary look. Neutral tones were added, with red as the color theme, moving from room to room through fabrics, pillows, plants or art. The design team also created a harmonious exchange of some old family pieces with Asian influences and modern objects—line definitely nothing too trendy.

The furniture is clean and streamlined, with dark wood breaking the monotony. Except for a very few small imported items, SDH uses mostly locally made items in line with its philosophy of supporting Filipino craftsmanship.

The company has a list of regular suppliers, including The Purest Collection, Bantayog, Bahayan Bazaleriña, Tai Ping and more. For texture and color items, Ojeda says, retail or factory prices compared to a mall's mark-up price of about 200 percent more.

Personal service

Client convenience is also part of the service. "Instead of dragging our clients to malls or showrooms, everything is delivered for fun by our suppliers to their homes, we design the look, and they can choose items from there," Ojeda says.

Service is their personal indulge; every consultation around the screens of flaunts with Mary Ann for better bargains, and applauds the young mother for being hands-on. As hands-on, in fact, that her husband had very little say—as long as he got his home theater on the first floor and a Lazy Boy in the master's bedroom, of course.

In mood being labeled "bedsy" by her kids, Mitra asked her daughters for their bedroom color preferences: green, pink and yellow. But the most excited was unsolicited voiced of her by the myriad of colors available. "Alam mo bi-ni ang dorning shadowing green!"

But thanks to the preferred SDH functions again, Mitra says colors were approved immediately on the first presentation shots.

There are no curtains in the Mitra home, consistent with Mitra's penchant for simplicity. And it would be a pity to cover the French and block windows, she adds. Fewer due living, dining and kitchen areas are naturally bright and sunny. Bedrooms have shutters installed instead of drapes, reducing by large the family's regular laundry.

Mitra struggles in the kitchen after work with a glass of fresh juice. Her favorite nook in the house, she had it designed especially big, with a walk-in pantry and elevated granite countertop. What's just as well, since one of her daughters has taken interest in baking.

If her husband has his playground of 5.1 surround-speakers and TV and DVD, the lady of the house gets her kick out of relaxing in a roomy kitchen.

Besides, she says, she'll collect watch movies on her big screen.

E-mail the author at ajamisola@inquirer.com.ph

CANDLES and ethnic textile holders are points of interest in typical Japanese-dining table layout.

THE MASTER bedroom is simple and unruffled, characterized by smooth textures and clear lines. The Lazy Boy surrounds area, once toys with a pillow to cushion its masculine recliner, is a special request by the man of the house.

THE CHILDREN chose the colors, but simplicity still defines their bedrooms.

A PULLOVER bed is used to maximize small space.

THE RED chaise and dark wood bring life to the neutral room. There are no curtains in this house, so natural light streams freely into the rooms.

A GIANT silkscreen literal wall with the family's unique birdcage "rescued" from the bodega.